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Elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance: comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action

Programme of activities for the implementation of the International Decade for People of African Descent

Report of the Secretary-General**

Summary

Under the programme of activities for the implementation of the International Decade for People of African Descent, great importance is placed on preventing and countering racial profiling. The present report, submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 69/16, provides an overview of experiences of racial profiling encountered by people of African descent, drawing on responses to a questionnaire circulated to key stakeholders by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. The applicable international legal framework, actions by international human rights mechanisms and documented examples of good practices are highlighted in the report, which also contains specific recommendations for countering and preventing racial profiling.

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I. Introduction

A. Background

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 69/16, by which the Assembly adopted the programme of activities for the implementation of the International Decade for People of African Descent and requested the Secretary-General to submit an annual progress report on the implementation of the activities of the Decade. In the resolution, the Assembly noted the common problem of racial profiling and called for the design, implementation and enforcement of measures to eliminate the problem. The report provides an overview of the types of racial profiling experienced by people of African descent, drawing on responses to a questionnaire circulated by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to key stakeholders,[1] the applicable international legal framework, actions by international human rights mechanisms and documented examples of good practices.

2. While the report presents illustrative examples of manifestations and impacts of racial profiling on people of African descent, greater efforts to collect information from other countries are required to address the problem.

B. Definition of racial profiling

3. There are multiple understandings of the notion of profiling. In the context of law enforcement, profiling has been defined as "the systematic association of sets of physical, behavioural or psychological characteristics with particular offences and their use as a basis for making law enforcement decisions".[2] In his report of 2015, the former Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, indicated that racial and ethnic profiling could be commonly understood to mean "a reliance by law enforcement, security and border control personnel on race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin as a basis for subjecting persons to detailed searches, identity checks and investigations" or for determining whether an individual was engaged in criminal activity (A/HRC/29/46, para. 2).

4. Racial profiling is incompatible with the protection of human rights and may be found in practice among police, customs, immigration and national security agencies. It is often manifested in the context of stops, identity checks, personal searches, arrests, raids, border and customs checks, home searches, targeting for surveillance or immigration decisions carried out by such agencies.

5. Race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin may legitimately be used by law enforcement agents as part of credible suspect descriptions related to specific

[1] In March 2018, OHCHR circulated a questionnaire addressed to all relevant stakeholders requesting information for the present report and received written submissions from 13 Member States (Argentina, Colombia, Cyprus, Ireland, Italy, Mexico, Nigeria, Portugal, Romania, the Russian Federation, Spain, Turkey and the United States of America), experts associated with human rights treaty bodies and special procedures mandate holders; national human rights mechanisms; and non-governmental organizations. The submissions are available at www.un.org/en/events/africandescentdecade.

[2] United Nations, Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force Working Group on Protecting Human Rights while Countering Terrorism, *Basic Human Rights Reference Guide: The Stopping and Searching of Persons in the Context of Countering Terrorism*, updated 2nd ed., (New York, March 2014), p. 12.

crimes, for example, as provided by witnesses or by intelligence sources.[3] In such cases, however, suspicion is based on reasonable and objective grounds about a particular crime or specific suspect, rather than on stereotypes or generalizations about the kinds of people that tend to commit crimes.

6. It should be noted that profiling can also be biased on the basis of sex, gender or religion or other prohibited or intersecting grounds. Those practices should be also addressed.

C. Examples of racial profiling of people of African descent

7. Concerns about racial profiling of people of African descent have been expressed in regard to various countries. Such concerns include the findings of the Human Rights Committee, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent through its country visits.

8. For example, during its country visit to Brazil, the Working Group found that there was an overrepresentation of Brazilians of African descent in the criminal justice system and in prisons, and a culture of racial profiling at all levels of the justice system (A/HRC/27/68/Add.1, para. 67).

9. From a mission to Canada, the Working Group highlighted that there was evidence of racial profiling in the practices used by the law enforcement authorities in Ottawa (A/HRC/36/60/Add.1, para. 35). The police practice of "carding", or stopping, questioning and documenting subjects suspected of a crime, disproportionately affected people of African descent. A York University research team working on the Ottawa Police Service Traffic Stop Race Data Collection Project documented that people of African descent faced disproportionately high incidences of being stopped in traffic. Although drivers of African descent represented less than 4 per cent of the driving population in the city, they were stopped 7,238 times during the period 2013–2015, which represented about 8.8 per cent of the total stops during that period, or 2.3 times more than could be fairly expected (ibid.).[4]

10. In her report of 2018, the current Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance addressed the issue of profiling in the context of access to citizenship and other status (A/HRC/38/52). She noted that ethno-nationalist ideologies might, in some cases, be implicitly manifested in legal and policy frameworks that systematically excluded specific racial, ethnic or national minorities from citizenship status, even where members of those minority groups had been territorially resident for multiple generations (ibid., para. 47). The phenomenon has had an impact on persons of African descent in various regions. For example, in the Dominican Republic, it was reported that individuals of Haitian descent were treated in a discriminatory manner in the registration offices responsible for issuing important identity documents (A/HRC/7/19/Add.5-A/HRC/7/23/Add.3, para. 62). Although many people in the Dominican Republic did not have proper identification documents, only those with "dark skins and Haitian features" were presumed to be "illegal" (ibid.). Similarly, the

[3] According to the Working Group, "when a terrorist crime has been committed or is in preparation and there is evidence or information raising reasonable grounds to assume the suspect fits a certain descriptive profile, then reliance on such characteristics as ethnic appearance, national origin or religion may be justified" (ibid., p. 14).

[4] See also Lorne Foster, Les Jacobs and Bobby Siu, "Race data and traffic stops in Ottawa, 2013–2015: a report on Ottawa and the police districts", research report prepared for the Ottawa Police Service, October 2016, pp. 3–4.

Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination expressed concern of the increased use of racial profiling by local law enforcement agencies in the United States of America to determine immigration status and to enforce immigration laws (CERD/C/USA/CO/7–9, para. 18).

II. International human rights law, legal and policy framework and the work of human rights mechanisms

11. Racial profiling violates a number of key principles and rights under international human rights law. These include principles of equality and non-discrimination contained in article 2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, article 2 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, articles 1, 2 and 5 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and article 2 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Those provisions offer a range of generalized protections of rights and freedoms against discrimination on such grounds as race, colour, descent, ethnic origin, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. The provisions include obligations on States to take steps to eliminate discrimination through laws, policies and institutions.

12. According to article 7 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and article 26 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, all persons are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to the equal protection of the law and to equal protection against discrimination. Racial profiling violates those rights.

13. In addition, racial profiling may have a negative impact on peoples' enjoyment of a number of other human rights, including the rights to life, liberty and security; to privacy; to freedom of movement; to protection against arbitrary arrest and other interventions; to effective remedy; to protection of the best interests of the child.

14. While international human rights treaties do not directly refer to racial or ethnic profiling, several international human rights mechanisms have explicitly highlighted racial profiling as a violation of international human rights law. A 2009 decision by the Human Rights Committee was the first decision by a treaty monitoring body that directly acknowledged racial profiling as unlawful discrimination (*Williams Lecraft v. Spain*). In the landmark case, a woman of African descent had been subjected to an identity check at a railway station solely on the grounds of her ethnicity. In its views, the Committee stated that police identity checks motivated by physical or ethnic characteristics were contrary to the international human right to non-discrimination, violating article 26, read in conjunction with article 2 (3), of the International Covenant.[5]

15. The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the treaty body that monitors States' implementation of the International Convention, has addressed the issue of racial profiling in three general recommendations. These include its general recommendation No. 13 (1993) on the training of law enforcement officials in the protection of human rights, in which it stressed that law enforcement officials should receive intensive training to ensure that, in the performance of their duties, they respect and protect human dignity and maintain and uphold the human rights of all persons, without distinction as to race, colour or national or ethnic origin.

16. In its general recommendation No. 31 (2005) on the prevention of racial discrimination in the administration and functioning of the criminal justice system, the Committee provided detailed guidance to States regarding national strategies aimed at combating racial discrimination in the criminal justice system, including

[5] Communication No. 1493/2006, *Williams Lecraft v. Spain*, views adopted on 27 July 2009.

changes to legislation, the development of training and the collection of statistics on the involvement of different social groups within the criminal justice system. Importantly, the Committee indicated that States should prevent questioning, arrests and searches that are in reality conducted solely on the basis of a person's physical appearance, colour, features, race or ethnicity or any profiling that exposes that person to greater suspicion.

17. In the Committee's general recommendation No. 34 (2011) on racial discrimination against people of African descent, which includes a section on the administration of justice, the Committee suggests that State parties should take measures to prevent discrimination by the police or other law enforcement agencies and officials against people of African descent, especially in connection with arrest and detention, and ensure that people of African descent are not victims of practices of racial or ethnic profiling.

18. In their concluding observations issued in response to regular reports from States parties to various instruments, treaty bodies provide opportunities to highlight positive and negative developments in the implementation of the treaties and make recommendations for improvement. The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the Human Rights Committee have expressed concerns about the use of racial profiling and recommended that States address the practice. The Human Rights Committee has issued detailed guidance recommending the adoption of legislation to ban racial profiling, the recording of stops and searches, the provision of records to people who were stopped or searched and the sanctioning of officials engaging in racial profiling.[6]

19. In the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted by Member States at the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, held in Durban, South Africa, in 2001, States were urged to design, implement and enforce effective measures to eliminate racial profiling, comprising the practice of police and other law enforcement officers relying, to any degree, on race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin as the basis for subjecting persons to investigatory activities or for determining whether an individual is engaged in criminal activity.

20. At the regional level, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, in its general policy recommendation No. 11 (2007) on combating racism and racial discrimination in policing, explicitly condemns racial profiling as a form of racial discrimination. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights has also identified racial profiling as a problem that affects people of African descent especially.[7] The African Charter on Human and People's Rights also includes the rights to freedom from discrimination, to equality before the law and equal protection of the law, to personal liberty and protection from arbitrary arrest and to freedom of movement, all of which are undermined by racial profiling.

III. Impacts of racial profiling

21. While the consequences of racial profiling have not been the subject of systematic research, various studies suggest that it may have negative effects on the attitudes and

[6] See, for example, CERD/C/ESP/CO/21–23, paras. 27 and 28 (Spain); CERD/C/SVN/CO/8–11, para. 8 (d) (Slovenia); CERD/C/POL/CO/20–21, para. 11 (Poland); CERD/C/IRL/CO/3–4, para. 18 (Ireland); CERD/C/NLD/CO/19–21, paras. 13–16 (Netherlands); and CCPR/C/GBR/CO/6, para. 29 (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland); CCPR/C/AUT/CO/5, para. 20 (Austria);CCPR/C/JPN/CO/6, para. 20 (a) (Japan).

[7] Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, *The Situation of People of African Descent in the Americas* (OEA/Ser.L/V/II. Doc.62).

well-being of the people and communities it targets. For example, during its country visit to Panama, the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent learned that the police often targeted young people of African descent, which bred anger, frustration and a lack of faith in the police force (A/HRC/24/52/Add.2).

22. In his report of 2007, the former Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism noted that, since 11 September 2001, law-enforcement authorities around the globe had adopted measures based on terrorist profiles, which included characteristics such as a person's presumed race, ethnicity, national origin or religion (A/HRC/4/26, para. 34). He stressed that terrorist-profiling practices based on "race" were incompatible with human rights principles and that such profiling practices were unsuitable and ineffective means of identifying potential terrorists and that they also entailed considerable negative consequences that might render such measures counterproductive in the fight against terrorism (ibid., para. 83).

23. Studies have suggested that racial profiling may also be ineffective and counterproductive as a general law enforcement tool. Specifically, research has suggested that people targeted by law enforcement authorities tend to have less trust in those authorities and, as a result, be less willing to cooperate with police, thereby potentially limiting the effectiveness of the latter. Racial profiling may also contribute to the broader stigmatization and negative stereotyping of targeted groups, which results in fewer social and economic opportunities for members of those groups and may, in turn, lead to their embracing of illegitimate or criminal lifestyles.[8]

24. Racial profiling also represents a missed opportunity to apply more effective strategies. In the context of street policing, for example, research has highlighted strategies that have a real impact on crime, such as "hotspot policing", whereby enforcement efforts are focused on very small geographical areas in which crime is concentrated; problem-oriented approaches to policing that rely on problem-solving methods; and focused deterrence approaches that use a variety of strategies to increase the deterrence of crime with regard to genuine, high-rate offenders.[9]

IV. Good practices

A. Overview

25. Law enforcement agents engage in racial profiling for a variety of reasons, including individual factors and agent biases, which may be subconscious or implicit. Such factors and biases may also be reinforced by the collective endorsement of racial profiling within institutions and by the lack of any human rights culture within law enforcement agencies. Addressing the issue requires a comprehensive policy framework.

26. Fortunately, as recognition of racial profiling has increased, so has the variety of strategies adopted by Governments, law enforcement agencies and civil society organizations to counter the problem. Such strategies may involve laws and policies that prohibit racial profiling and provide guidance on appropriate conduct by law enforcement officials; systems of data collection and monitoring that track police activities; mechanisms for the internal and external accountability of law enforcement

[8] Open Society Justice Initiative, *Reducing Ethnic Profiling in the European Union: A Handbook of good practices* (New York, Open Society Foundations, 2012).

[9] See, for example, Anthony A. Braga, Andrew V. Papachristos and David M. Hureau, "The effects of hot spots policing on crime: an updated systematic review and meta-analysis", *Justice Quarterly*, vol. 31, No. 4 (2014).

personnel; greater community involvement in the development of law enforcement policies and practices; and improvements to training and recruitment of law enforcement personnel.

27. Although few of those practices have been the focus of rigorous research and evaluation, some studies have suggested that such practices, when combined, may help to reduce patterns of racial profiling. This outcome was seen to have occurred in some English police agencies following the introduction of reforms designed to challenge bias in stop and search decision-making.[10] It was also seen in Spain, where there was a perceived decline in bias in encounters between police and members of the public following the introduction of reforms as part of a series of pilot programmes.[11]

B. Prohibitions against racial profiling and guidance for non-discriminatory law enforcement

28. It is important that States ensure formal prohibitions against racial profiling. Such prohibitions may take the form of State laws, codes of conduct and ethics or standard operating procedures for law enforcement agencies. At the most general level are legal frameworks that prohibit racial discrimination and that may apply to the practice of racial profiling. An example of a law upholding equality enacted in Colombia is provided in box 1. Similar laws were reported by several other countries, including Argentina, Ireland, Mexico, South Africa, Spain and Turkey.

Box 1
Colombia: statutory protections against discrimination

Colombia reported the existence of various legal norms designed to protect people of African descent and members of other minority groups from racial profiling by law enforcement officials. These norms include the Political Constitution of 1991, which provides that no person should be discriminated against for reasons of sex, race, national origin, language, religion, political opinion or philosophy and that all people must therefore receive the same treatment and enjoy the same rights and opportunities. In addition, article 35 of Act 734 of 2002 prohibits any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference by any public servant based on race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin that has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.

29. Beyond such general frameworks, some States have issued formal and explicit guidelines that specifically prohibit ethnic or racial profiling and are intended to help police to make suspicion-led decisions. Such guidelines may take the form of written laws, codes of conduct or agency policies. Boxes 2 and 3 contain descriptions of such guidelines used in the Netherlands and in England and Wales, respectively.

[10] Joel Miller, "Stop and search in England: a reformed tactic or business as usual?" *British Journal of Criminology*, vol. 50, No. 5 (1 September 2010).

[11] Open Society Justice Initiative and Plataforma por la Gestión Policial de la Diversidad, *Fair and Effective Police Stops: Lessons in Reform from Five Spanish Police Agencies — Technical Report* (New York, Open Society Foundations, 2015).

Box 2
Netherlands: guidelines for police on avoiding discrimination during control activities

On the basis of the Police Act 2012, revised guidelines were issued to the Dutch national police on how to select "suspect" persons and cars when carrying out controls, using guidelines provided by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance in its general policy recommendation No. 11 (2007) on combating racism and racial discrimination in policing. Police officers must now explain every control carried out with regard to any person in terms of the individual's behaviour, using objective criteria, while disregarding personal characteristics such as ethnicity or skin colour. As a consequence, the police may no longer select suspect persons solely or predominantly on the grounds of skin colour, descent and/or religion.[a]

[a] See also European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, *ECRI Report on the Netherlands: Fourth Monitoring Cycle* (CRI(2013)39).

Box 3
England and Wales, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland: guidance on permissible and non-permissible suspicion for police searches

The Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 regulates police powers in England and Wales. The Act relies on several codes of practice, which are subject to periodic modification. Code A, which regulates the exercise by police officers of statutory powers to stop and search, stipulates that reasonable suspicion can never be supported on the basis of personal factors. Accordingly, unless the police have information or intelligence that provides a description of a person suspected of carrying an article for which there is a power to stop and search, the following factors cannot be used, alone or in combination with each other, or in combination with any other factor, as the reason for stopping and searching any individual, including any vehicle which they are driving or in which they are being carried:

(a) A person's physical appearance with regard, for example, to age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation or the fact that the person is known to have a previous conviction;

(b) Generalizations or stereotypical images of certain groups or categories of people as more likely to be involved in criminal activity.

Reasonable grounds for suspicion should normally be linked to accurate and current intelligence or information relating to articles for which there is a power to stop and search that are being carried by individuals or in vehicles in any locality, but may also exist without specific information or intelligence and on the basis of the behaviour of a person.

C. Awareness-raising, training and recruitment

30. Efforts to influence the behaviour and decision-making of law enforcement agents require that they be made aware of the context of the communities they serve and that they fully understand the laws and policies intended to govern their own conduct. Such efforts should take place at the institutional level and in the context of broader reforms that address policies and systems of accountability, as described

below. Awareness-raising should be led by key officials responsible for drafting internal policies and by those responsible for internal accountability and training.

31. One approach to raising awareness is through the training of law enforcement agents. Many States, including Australia, Cyprus, Guatemala and Nigeria, provide training focused on human rights and addressing racial discrimination. Box 4 provides a description of awareness-raising workshops organized by OHCHR in Brazil, addressed in particular to government bodies and civil society.

Box 4

Brazil: raising awareness of government officials and civil society through workshops organized by the United Nations

In November and December 2017, the United Nations country team in Brazil, OHCHR and the Department of Public Information, through the United Nations information centre in Rio de Janeiro, organized two workshops on racial profiling. The meetings were attended by representatives of civil society organizations, government bodies, academia, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and United Nations agencies in the country. The aim of the workshops was to exchange experiences and good practices and identify opportunities for action within the United Nations and other international organizations to prevent and counter racial profiling. Participants analysed the context for and challenges to addressing racial profiling, torture and abuse by law enforcement officials in Brazil. Individual cases and records of violations were presented as ways raise awareness about such practices. The workshops were organized within the framework of the Vidas Negras (Black Lives) public information campaign, led by the country team and supported by the Department of Public Information. The campaign is aimed at raising awareness, especially among decision makers and Brazilian society, about violence against black youth in Brazil and its lethal consequences. The campaign has been engaging key public actors and, since the launch of its website (https://nacoesunidas.org/vidasnegras) in November 2017, has reached over 35 million people through various social media platforms.

32. Non-discriminatory law enforcement is also supported through the recruiting and retention of officers from diverse backgrounds, to make them more representative of the populations they police. This increased representation has the potential to influence the culture of agencies and the attitudes of staff, which, in turn, is expected to produce less biased decision-making. This approach to diverse hiring taken in Sweden is described in box 5.

Box 5

Sweden: diversity in police recruitment

Prior to the introduction of the Spira project in 2005, police in Stockholm had few employees from a non-Nordic background. The project was aimed at increasing ethnic minority representation in the police force, beginning in the borough of Södertälje. Out of 140 applications from members of ethnic minorities, 17 people were employed in various civilian positions, with the expectation that they would later take on police officer roles. The project was subsequently rolled out across the rest of Stockholm, and in 2009, 70 people, most of non-Nordic origin, were offered employment with the police.[a]

[a] Open Society Justice Initiative, *Reducing Ethnic Profiling in the European Union*.

D. Community engagement

33. Constructive engagement between law enforcement agencies and community representatives contributes to non-discriminatory law enforcement policies and practices. This approach has the potential to improve communication between law enforcement authorities and the community, raise awareness among law enforcement agents of the needs and expectations of the members of the racial, ethnic and religious communities they serve. It can also enable community members to provide input for the development of police policies and hold law enforcement authorities accountable for their policies and practices, for example, through reviews of records, statistics and policing policies. Box 6 presents an example of community monitoring of stop and search encounters in London. Similarly, community involvement in training and capacity-building for police in Pernambuco, Brazil, is described in box 7.

Box 6
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland: community monitoring groups and stop and search activities (London)

In London, a series of local community monitoring groups have been established within each London borough to review the practice of stop and search by the city's Metropolitan Police Service. Community monitoring groups are made up of members of the community and are supported by a London-wide community monitoring network. Group members may draw on potential sources, including local government, police associations, local charities and community-based organizations, in carrying out their reviews. The role of the groups is to hold police accountable, scrutinize the practice of stop and search, including patterns of stopping and searching members of ethnic minorities, and provide local communities with a voice through which to address their local police in relation to stop and search activities. As part of this project, the groups are provided with data on stop and search encounters that they can then review.[a]

[a] Metropolitan Police Authority, "A practical guide to stop and search community monitoring groups", August 2009.

Box 7
Brazil: collaboration between civil society groups and police (Pernambuco)

The Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent reported that, in Pernambuco, Brazil, the Group against Institutional Racism, which was created in 2009, collaborates with the local police force in a number of areas. This collaboration includes providing training and capacity-building for the military police. The group also runs a hotline for reporting racist crimes. In addition, the organization carries out public campaigns against racism, organizes cultural events and conferences and provides support to the Brazilian communities of African descent, including members of the *quilombola* and *terreiro* communities (see A/HRC/27/68/Add.1).

E. Data collection

34. Important components of efforts to challenge racial profiling are the collection and analysis of data on law enforcement practices such as identity checks, traffic

stops, migration control or border searches, through which the racial and ethnic origin of the targeted individual is recorded. The data collected for analysis must therefore be clearly separated from information collected for intelligence purposes. A comprehensive and predetermined legal framework is needed with regard to the collection, access, storage and removal of such data. Data should be collected in accordance with international human rights and fundamental freedoms, using mechanisms such as privacy guarantees and data protection regulations to control the dangers of misuse, stigmatization and negative stereotyping. One way to protect the identity of the individuals concerned is to anonymize the data after collection.

35. The collection of data may result in law enforcement agents becoming more thoughtful about their decision-making, more accountable to the persons they are targeting and subject to stronger supervision and management. It would also allow for scrutiny of individual encounters and of broader patterns and trends in the use of police tactics. Analysis of the data would also support the strategic management of law enforcement operations, which should help improve the fairness and effectiveness of police activities. Importantly, it would provide an opportunity to measure levels of racial disparity and to consider strategies for addressing biases. It would also provide opportunities for external accountability by community and human rights organizations. The use of a mobile app to record stops in the West Midlands region of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland is described in box 8.

Box 8
West Midlands, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland: mobile app for recording police stops

On 30 August 2017, a new mobile app was launched to make stops and searches quicker and more efficient. The app reportedly makes it easier to carry out a practice that has been required by law for many years. The eSearch app allows officers to record details of street encounters on their smartphones without the need to call contact centre staff. The location of each search is automatically recorded by the Global Positioning System, and the app is expected to cut demand on force contact staff by almost 1,000 calls a month. Officers are to input details directly via their phones and receive a unique reference number without needing to wait for contact centre staff to record searches.[a]

[a] West Midlands Police, "New 'app' set to speed up stop and search process", 30 August 2017.

F. Internal accountability

36. The extent to which law enforcement agents avoid racial profiling practices and adhere to written standards of decision-making and conduct is likely also an indication of the willingness of managers and supervisors to promote non-discriminatory practices within law enforcement agencies, to monitor behaviours and to challenge those behaviours when they deviate from policy. That approach can be supported by the availability of data and analyses on agent decision-making and practice. The approach also reflects policies and procedures that ensure that practices indicative of racial profiling are routinely assessed and challenged.

37. One method is for agency managers to conduct policy audits in which they review existing policies, operations and practices that may be contributing to patterns of racial profiling. The fact that that senior officials have increased supervision of the use of discretionary powers by law enforcement officials in areas related to racial

profiling is also important. Ideally, such audits should be carried out with the engagement of members of the broader community, who can help shape questions and present concerns, and of staff at different levels within the organization.

38. Box 9 provides a description of an internal audit conducted by the Toronto Police Service in Canada. Box 10 provides an example of internal accountability that relies directly on data on police tactics routinely collected within the Hertfordshire Constabulary in the United Kingdom in order to examine individual agent conduct and stop and search patterns.

Box 9
Canada: reviewing agency practices (Toronto)

In Canada, the Toronto Police Service conducted an internal audit in 2012, when the Chief of Police initiated a review of the agency's practices in relation to community engagement, focusing on police stops. The exercise involved consultations with a cross section of staff and community members and led to several recommendations, including a new "core value" focused on non-discrimination, the creation of a community advisory committee to advise the agency on issues relating to racial profiling and the development of an early warning system to detect patterns of possible bias among officers.[a]

[a] Toronto Police Service, *The Police and Community Engagement Review (The PACER Report): Phase II — Internal Report and Recommendations* (2013).

Box 10
England, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland: identifying officers with potentially problematic patterns of contact

In the period 2006–2007, in Hertfordshire Constabulary in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, people of African descent were five times more likely to be stopped and searched than the majority of the population. Under new reforms implemented in the period 2007–2008, stop forms and software were introduced to analyse stop and search patterns. The software was programmed to identify individual officers who stopped members of minority groups substantially more often than could be expected given their job assignments.

Initially, 25 officers were flagged for having high rates of stopping members of minority groups. The analysis was repeated monthly. The force diversity unit conducted interviews with the officers that had been initially identified as conducting a disproportionate number of stops and searches of members of minority groups and with those whose stop and search activities were identified as being proportionate. The interviews highlighted problems with some officers' understanding of appropriate grounds for conducting stops and searches. It was further suggested that some operations, despite having legitimate objectives, had disproportionate impacts on members of minority groups. Under the programme, officers continued to be reviewed on a monthly basis, with emails sent automatically to the supervisors of officers flagged for disproportionate stop and search rates with regard to minorities. The emails included details of the officers' behaviour and a list of questions for supervisors to raise with the officers. The supervisors also received training in strategies to use when interviewing the officers in question. Supervisors were expected to report back on those interviews and provide recommendations for action or training.

Subsequently, rates of disproportionality were reduced among the targeted officers and in the force as a whole.[a]

[a] European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, *Towards More Effective Policing: Understanding and Preventing Discriminatory Ethnic Profiling — A Guide* (Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union, 2010).

39. Data collected on police encounters can also be used to reflect critically on the broader pattern of police tactics and their impact on minorities. In an example from Spain (see box 11), an analysis of records generated by ethnic and racial monitoring of police stops was used to reshape police policies and practices to minimize patterns of bias.

Box 11
Spain: refocusing police identity checks on the basis of monitored data (Fuenlabrada)

The Open Society Justice Initiative reported that, in Fuenlabrada, police identity checks were monitored through a pilot project to record such checks. An analysis of the monitoring data at the beginning of the pilot project showed high rates of identity checks characterized by officer discretion in deciding whom to stop. The types of checks monitored involved stops conducted in "areas under intensive police control", as part of "preventive operations" and for "suspicious behaviour". Possibly because that discretion allowed officers to draw on generalizations and stereotypes, such checks were characterized by a substantial overrepresentation of foreign nationals. Following analysis of the monitoring data, managers modified the way frontline officers were tasked. Over a period of six months, those modifications led to substantial reductions in the three types of identity checks being monitored (areas under intensive police control, preventive operations and suspicious behaviour), of 90 per cent, 76 per cent and 56 per cent, respectively. Importantly, the reduction in those discretionary stops was accompanied by a substantial reduction in the overrepresentation of foreigners during the entire six-month pilot period.[a]

[a] Open Society Justice Initiative, *Fair and Effective Police Stops*.

G. External accountability

40. The ability of external actors, whether members of the public, community groups or the media or international human rights mechanisms, national human rights institutions or equality bodies, to challenge inappropriate law enforcement practices presents another way to control racial profiling. Those actors' ability to mount such challenges can be supported by ensuring their access to information, data and analyses on agent decision-making and practice or through the exercise of their role in reviewing public complaints.

41. One approach to external accountability is to provide a record of a stop or search to the member of the public involved, including information on the encounter and the reasons it was conducted. This approach provides a form of "on-the-spot" accountability and is often coupled with the data collection approaches described above. Variations of it have been used in several countries, including Bulgaria, Spain and the United Kingdom.

42. External accountability can also be provided by commissions or ombudspersons that are responsible for responding to public complaints about discrimination. Examples can be found in Portugal, South Africa and the United Kingdom. Box 12 provides an example from the Australian Human Rights Commission, which is responsible for public complaints related to discrimination. Box 13 provides an example from the United States, where the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice may investigate and bring suit against agencies engaged on racial profiling.

Box 12
Australia: protection of the rights to non-discrimination (Australian Human Rights Commission)

The Australian Human Rights Commission reported that Australian jurisdictions have legislative prohibitions against racial discrimination. To uphold those standards, the Australian Human Rights Commission has a statutorily appointed a Race Discrimination Commissioner with a mandate to investigate complaints under anti-discrimination legislation. Under its complaint handling function, the Commission considers matters of alleged discrimination on the basis of race and racial hatred. The investigation and conciliation service provides a free and impartial mechanism for parties to resolve complaints relating to alleged racial discrimination without needing to go to court. Many outcomes of complaints resolved through the Commission's investigation and conciliation service extend beyond individual compensation and often include systemic outcomes such as anti-discrimination training or changes in policy. If conciliation fails, an individual may seek a determination by the federal courts.

Box 13
United States of America: bringing suits against agencies engaged in racial profiling

The United States reported that the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice may investigate and bring suits against agencies that engage in, or exhibit patterns or adopt practices of, racial profiling in violation of the Constitution. For example, in 2015, the Division reached a comprehensive settlement with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department in a suit alleging systemic discrimination in policing against African-Americans in the Antelope Valley community. After an investigation following a highly publicized police shooting in Ferguson, Missouri, the Division reached an agreement with the city in March 2016, resolving allegations of discriminatory policing against African-Americans.

43. External accountability includes having government oversight bodies and civil society groups take an active role in monitoring police activities and publicizing their findings. The media can also play an important role in that regard. In Spain, for example, local civil society groups have been actively involved in monitoring and publishing studies on police stops of members of the public and on patterns of bias (see box 14).

Box 14
Spain: civil society organizations and police accountability

The Asociación Pro Derechos Humanos de Andalusia reported that local civil society groups in Spain have been active in monitoring and advocating against police racial profiling in the country. For example, in 2016, the association published a report, together with the Institution of Peace and Conflicts Investigation of the University of Granada, on a study that involved direct observations of police stops conducted at the local bus station in Granada. The findings indicated that people of African descent were checked 42 times more than people of "Caucasian" origin. The report highlights apparently racist motives directing the checks.[a]

[a] Asociación Pro Derechos Humanos de Andalucía and Instituto de la Paz y los Conflictos, Universidad de Granada, *Identificaciones Basadas en Perfil Étnico en Granada: Estudio Realizado Mediante Observación y Entrevistas Directas* (Identity Checks Based on Ethnic Profiling in Granada: Study Conducted via Direct Observation and Face-to-Face Interviews) (Granada, 2016).

44. Civil society organizations may also challenge ethnic and racial profiling through United Nations human rights mechanisms that seek to challenge practices and help establish and reinforce precedents to which law enforcement authorities can be held accountable. One important example of such a challenge in Europe has been the litigation efforts relating to a Spanish case of racial profiling, as described in box 15.

Box 15
Spain: using United Nations human rights mechanisms

The case of *Williams Lecraft v. Spain* involved an African-American woman of Spanish citizenship who was stopped and asked for identity documents by a national police officer in a railway station in 1992. The officer indicated that Ms. Williams Lecraft had been stopped because her appearance suggested that she was more likely to be an undocumented migrant. Ms. Williams Lecraft filed a complaint, which was dismissed by a Spanish national court, and her subsequent appeal to the Constitutional Court of Spain was also unsuccessful.

Ms. Williams Lecraft subsequently took the case to the Human Rights Committee, supported by three civil society organizations: the Open Society Justice Initiative, Women's Link Worldwide and SOS Racismo Madrid. The Human Rights Committee ruled in favour of the complainant, concluding that the incident was a violation of article 26, read together with article 2 (3), of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

In its views, the Human Rights Committee called for amendments to Spanish provisions regulating police powers to conduct identity checks, noting that race, ethnicity and/or physical characteristics may not be the basis for decisions to conduct a stop for an identity check, except when they are part of a suspect description. The Committee also required that Spain instruct all police forces to issue operational guidance manuals for police officers on following those principles.[a]

[a] Communication No. 1493/2006, *Williams Lecraft v. Spain*.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

45. **The practice of racial profiling by law enforcement agencies is contrary to international legal norms, including the principle of non-discrimination and the rights to equality before the law and equal protection of the law. Moreover, evidence shows that racial profiling is not an effective law enforcement tool and should be replaced with more effective approaches. Further evidence suggests that racial profiling may also have negative effects on the attitudes and well-being of the people and communities targeted.**

46. **In response to negative consequences associated with racial profiling, national law enforcement and government bodies have developed laws and policies that prohibit the generalized use of race, ethnicity and other prohibited grounds of discrimination as a basis for suspicion and decision-making in law enforcement actions. In many cases, those laws and policies were developed with the collaboration of local and international civil society actors, as well as international human rights mechanisms. Member States should prohibit the practice of racial profiling and ensure that any strategies targeting law enforcement officers are accompanied by practical guidance on non-discriminatory decision-making.**

47. **Member States should also encourage law enforcement agencies to develop targeted training programmes that raise awareness among officers of the various social biases that may affect their conduct. Training materials should include both international human rights standards and principles and the national laws and policies that govern officers' conduct. It is vital that officers be aware of the consequences of any misconduct and that agencies and justice institutions follow through on any reported incident, making use of all accountability measures available to address the problem. Agencies should also develop recruitment and retention strategies that promote a diverse workforce reflective of the populations they serve.**

48. **Increased efforts to collect data on relevant law enforcement practices such as identity checks, traffic stops and border searches, disaggregated by factors that include the racial and ethnic identity of the targeted population, would be useful for understanding local trends and would help to raise awareness of the issue among law enforcement officers. Such data may be used to support efforts by agencies to monitor the behaviour of officers and to refine internal accountability measures. All data should be collected in accordance with human rights and fundamental freedoms, using mechanisms such as data protection regulations and privacy guarantees.**

49. **Increasing opportunities for dialogue with community leaders, civil society, national human rights institutions and equality bodies may also improve police-community relations and reduce levels and perceptions of racial profiling. Such dialogue has the potential to influence the culture of agencies and the attitudes of staff with a view to producing less biased decision-making. Close collaboration among multiple stakeholders, such as victims' groups, national human rights institutions, equality bodies and both local and national actors, often with the support of international organisations and jurisprudence from international and human rights mechanisms, has resulted in some of the most promising practices against racial profiling seen in recent years. That kind of dynamic engagement should be encouraged and lessons learned could be shared, in the spirit of cooperation, between national and local agencies and government authorities. The relevant United Nations entities can provide expertise and support to assist countries in undertaking such a comprehensive approach to eliminating racial profiling.**

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Progress in the renovation of Africa Hall and the construction of new office facilities at the Economic Commission for Africa in Addis Ababa

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 72/262 A, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit, at the main part of its seventy-third session, a progress report on the implementation of the construction projects and the renovation of the conference facilities at the Economic Commission for Africa, including Africa Hall and the visitors' centre, outlining, inter alia, project expenditure and total costs.

The report provides an update on the design development, procurement activities, project governance, work progress, contingency management and status of voluntary contributions towards the Africa Hall renovation project, along with an update on the business case for the visitors' centre. The report also provides information on the initiation of a project risk management framework, including the outcome of a quantitative risk analysis, which shows that the potential impact of known risks falls within expected levels and provides the Organization with confidence that the project will be completed within available resources.

It is recommended that the General Assembly take note of the progress made since the issuance of the previous progress report (A/72/374), take note of the revised cost plan for the Africa Hall project, and appropriate an amount of $8,931,100 for project activities in 2019.

* A/73/150.

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I. Update on the construction of new office facilities (Zambezi Building) and ancillary works

1. By its resolution 56/270, the General Assembly approved the construction of new office facilities at the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). Known as the Zambezi Building, the construction of the new office facilities was completed in the third quarter of 2017. The maximum overall cost approved for the project was $15,333,200.

2. By its resolution 62/238, the General Assembly approved additional project components (referred to herein as ancillary works), which included improvements to the access, safety and functionality of the Zambezi Building site, as well as a generator house. In the third quarter of 2017, both the final completion of the generator house and substantial completion of the remaining ancillary works were achieved. As of the drafting of the present report, the overall status of the remaining ancillary works project has remained on track. The project is currently in the defect liability period. The project is expected to be closed out, following the expiry of the one-year liability period, which is set to end in the third quarter of 2018. At that time, a certificate of final completion will be issued and the final 5 per cent retention payment, in the amount of $85,000, will be disbursed to the contractor, thereby marking the formal completion of the project.

II. Progress in the Africa Hall renovation project

A. Background

3. By its resolution 70/248 A, the General Assembly approved the project scope, schedule and maximum overall costs in the amount of $56.9 million for stages 3 to 5 of the Africa Hall renovation project, along with the establishment of a multi-year construction-in-progress account, and appropriated an amount of $13,438,600 under the programme budget for the biennium 2016–2017. In its resolution 71/272 A, the General Assembly took note of the cost plan adjustments made, which indicated reduced cash needs for the biennium 2016–2017, as well as other adjustments for the following years. By its resolution 72/262 A, the General Assembly approved an appropriation of $5,700,300 under the programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019 for project activities in 2018.

B. Project objectives

4. The project's objectives, specified in related previous reports of the Secretary-General, remain unchanged.

5. The project aims to renovate the building in a manner that respects the original design and appearance of spaces while ensuring compliance with best practices with respect to current international building standards and codes. These include: (a) structural and seismic requirements; (b) physical, life and fire safety of occupants; (c) accessibility and other provisions for persons with disabilities; (d) energy efficiency and other initiatives related to the efficient use of natural resources; and (e) achievement of healthy indoor air and light quality.

6. The project is expected to be delivered within the maximum approved budget of $56.9 million, which includes contingency provisions. The cost plan is regularly monitored and maintained, and the project budget is currently considered sufficient to complete the project.

7. The project is scheduled for completion by the end of 2021. However, while the Secretariat considers that project can be completed by that time, there are significant risks that could delay project completion, as further described in the report.

8. Since its inception, the project, both in terms of design and construction, is being developed and implemented in line with current international building codes and standards, with a view to achieving the highest standards for conference facilities, while preserving and restoring the historical and cultural values embedded in the building's architecture. All proposed variations, modifications or changes made during the present reporting period have been assessed with a view to maintaining the overall project objectives, including cost, schedule and quality objectives.

9. With support from the Office of Central Support Services, and in line with paragraph 13 of section V of General Assembly resolution 71/272 A, ECA has established a governance structure for the project, as summarized below.

C. Project governance

Stakeholders Committee

10. During the reporting period, the Stakeholders Committee, which was established in 2016, met twice, in November 2017 and July 2018.

11. At the second meeting, in July 2018, stakeholders were updated on and informed of project progress, including the final detailed design for the main renovation of Africa Hall. In accordance with the established terms of reference, the recommendations of Stakeholders Committee members are important, even essential, given that the stakeholders are responsible for establishing and monitoring whether the project meets specific requirements in their field of expertise and responsibility, and for providing advice accordingly to the project owner. That is especially relevant during the current phase of the project, in which any changes in requirements could lead to variations (change orders) that result in cost or schedule overruns.

Advisory Board

12. The Advisory Board was constituted in July 2017 and first met in August 2017. Subsequent meetings were held in December 2017 and May 2018. A fourth meeting is scheduled for September 2018. Board members have performed their roles actively and have provided the project owner with valuable views and recommendations, including those mentioned in the paragraphs below.

13. Discussions at the two most recent meetings contributed to the further fine-tuning of the Board's draft terms of reference, which have since been finalized, to clarify the role of the Board. To date, the Board has provided useful input and analysis for use in the design development; given advice on the strategy for mobilizing voluntary contributions and for enhancing and strengthening coordination with host country authorities; and offered to facilitate the resolution of outstanding host country matters (such as the donation of an additional parcel of land for use by ECA for visitors' parking).

14. During its meetings, the Board was briefed on the project's status and on both potential and actual changes to project baselines, to enable the Board to contribute to the identification of required mitigation measures, in particular with regard to potential schedule slippage.

15. Following the appointment of Board members in 2017 (see A/72/374, paras. 44 and 45), the representatives of Chile and the Islamic Republic of Iran had to cut short

their membership owing to diplomatic reassignment. Representatives of Bangladesh and Cuba have recently been appointed to replace the outgoing members.

Coordination with Headquarters

16. An administrative and coordination agreement signed in 2017 provides a framework for various project management functions, such as change controls. It also defines the roles and responsibilities of team members during the construction administration phase of the project.

17. Representatives from the Global Property Management Service of the Office of Central Support Services holds regular bimonthly coordination meetings with the ECA project team and conducted one mission to Addis Ababa, in February 2018. The Global Property Management Service provides oversight for the project, technical guidance and advice to the project team, and insights from lessons learned from other United Nations capital projects, while ensuring that applicable global property-related policies are adhered to in the activities undertaken by the project team. In the present reporting period, emphasis was placed on the provision of independent risk management services, in line with General Assembly resolution 72/262 A.

D. Project management

18. The dedicated project management team is led by a project manager (P-5), who reports to the project executive, the Director of Administration of ECA. The project team comprises an architect/engineer (P-4), a procurement officer (P-3), an architectural/civil/structural engineer (National Officer), a mechanical/electrical engineer (National Officer), a clerk of works (National Officer), a finance and budget assistant (local level) and a logistics and shipping assistant (local level), all approved by the General Assembly in resolution 70/248 A.

19. A project coordinator (P-4), the costs of whom are shared with the seismic mitigation retrofit and life-cycle replacements project at the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, situated in the Office of Central Support Services and based at Headquarters, was approved by the General Assembly in resolution 71/272 A. The incumbent was brought on board in November 2017 and has since been providing technical guidance and oversight for the project, with an emphasis on risk management, including administering the contract of the independent risk management consultant.

20. Six security officers (local level), approved by the General Assembly in resolution 71/272 A, have been recruited and have been on duty since September 2017. After the required training was received, those officers have joined the ECA Security and Safety Service and contribute to the security of the construction site.

21. As indicated in the previous report (see A/72/374, para. 48), ECA is currently in the process of engaging consultants to meet the requirements for specialized expertise that is not available within the project team. Below is an update on the status of those appointments:

(a) Exhibition curator experts — Initial recruitment activities in July 2017 found no suitable candidates. Hence, it was decided to split the services into two contracts. One expert will focus on the curatorial component, providing input for the design of the permanent exhibition, compiling materials and documents to be exhibited, and overseeing work implementation. The other expert will focus on organizational elements, including by supporting the Public Information and Knowledge Management Division in refining the business case and establishing design criteria for the visitors' centre.

(b) Artworks restoration expert — Following an initial unsuccessful attempt in December 2017, ECA relaunched the recruitment process in March 2018, reaching out to the broadest possible audience (including through the network of schools of art in Addis Ababa). A suitable candidate was finally selected and is expected to be onboarded in September 2018. The expert will participate in the evaluation of tenders for artwork restoration and oversee the restoration.

(c) Information technology, audiovisual and conference engineering services expert — A recruitment effort launched in December 2017 did not yield satisfactory results. Therefore, it was decided, in coordination with the Information and Communications Technology Service at ECA, that the required project tasks would be carried out internally by establishing a working group comprising members with the skills necessary to oversee planned upgrades to the conference engineering systems, allowing for a smooth hand-over of related project components to the Information and Communications Technology Service.

E. Project accountability

22. In line with General Assembly resolutions 69/262, 70/248 A, 71/272 A and 72/262 A, the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted its third annual audit of the project between February and March 2018.

23. The latest audit report, which was issued in May 2018, contained four important recommendations: (a) to establish a trust fund to account for voluntary and in-kind contributions; (b) to develop and implement an action plan to conduct the planned resource mobilization activities; (c) to incorporate different admission options for the visitors' centre; and (d) to quantify the effects of the delay in commencing construction in terms of cost and incorporate that data into a Monte Carlo simulation.

24. ECA values the regular OIOS audits given that they provide the occasion for the project owner, the project executive and team members to improve efforts with a view to the effective and efficient implementation of the project. Also highlighted in the audit outcomes were the importance of coordinated stakeholder involvement during project implementation and the requirement to closely monitor the project schedule.

F. Risk management

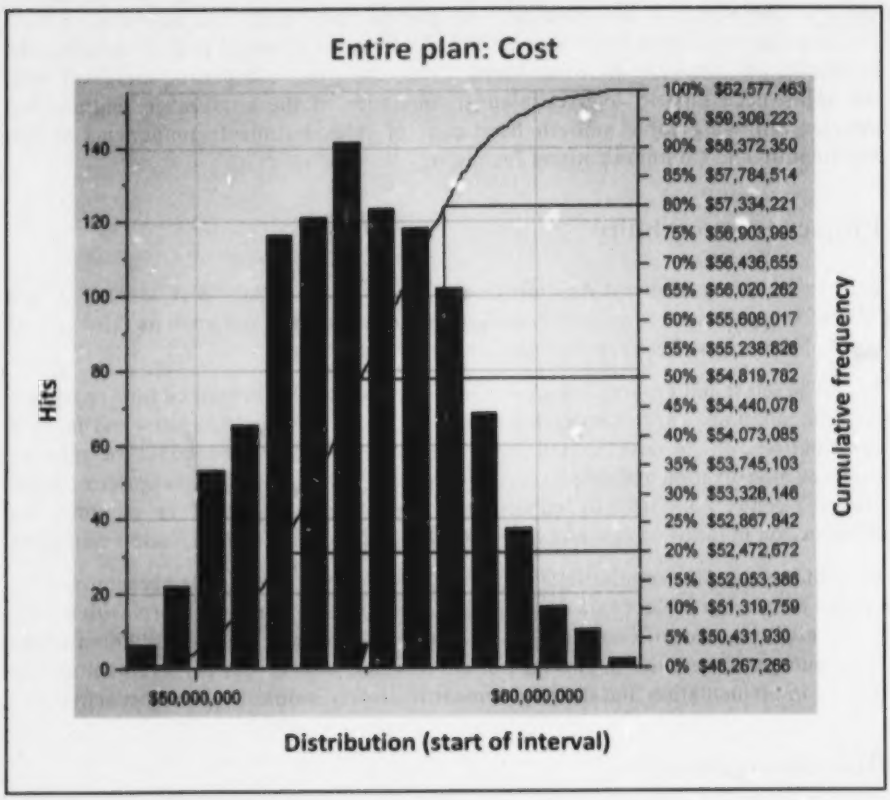
Independent risk management

25. The Office of Central Support Services, in consultation with the ECA project team, established a project risk management strategy, the purpose of which has been to achieve the following: (a) to establish processes and procedures for the identification, assessment and prioritization of risks; (b) to facilitate the planning and implementation of risk responses that ensure the successful delivery on expected project objectives; and (c) to enable the Organization to assess and manage a risk-based contingency budget, in line with recommendations of the Advisory Committee for Administrative and Budgetary Questions (see A/72/7/Add.26, para. 14).

26. In February 2018, a risk workshop was held at ECA that was facilitated by the Office of Central Support Services and attended by the project team, ECA stakeholders and representatives from the independent risk management firm. The outcomes and products of the workshop included the adoption of a project risk management strategy, the creation of a project risk register and the implementation of a quantitative analysis of risks (i.e., a Monte Carlo simulation). The independent risk management firm committed to producing two reports per year throughout the project implementation period, the first of which was issued in June 2018.

27. The Monte Carlo analysis takes input from the project team, including risk scores (being the product of the factor's probability and likelihood) for each risk, the most likely range of quantitative effects of each risk, and simulates thousands of theoretical versions of the project. A summary of the first Monte Carlo analysis, in the form of a cost histogram, is shown in figure I below.

Figure I
Cost histogram of Africa Hall renovation project risks as of June 2018



28. For the Secretariat's capital construction projects, a "P80" benchmark has been established as the target for measuring risk on a given project, meaning that the project team would ideally strive to have an 80 per cent confidence level that the project would be completed within budget.

29. The Monte Carlo simulation shows that there is a 75 per cent level of confidence that the project would be completed within the approved budget. Although slightly below the ideal level, given the stage of the project (i.e., prior to the awarding of the construction contract), the Secretariat remains confident that the project will be delivered within budget, given that the main strategies for mitigating the major risks have already been identified and the project team has already started to align its operative efforts accordingly.

Integrated risk management

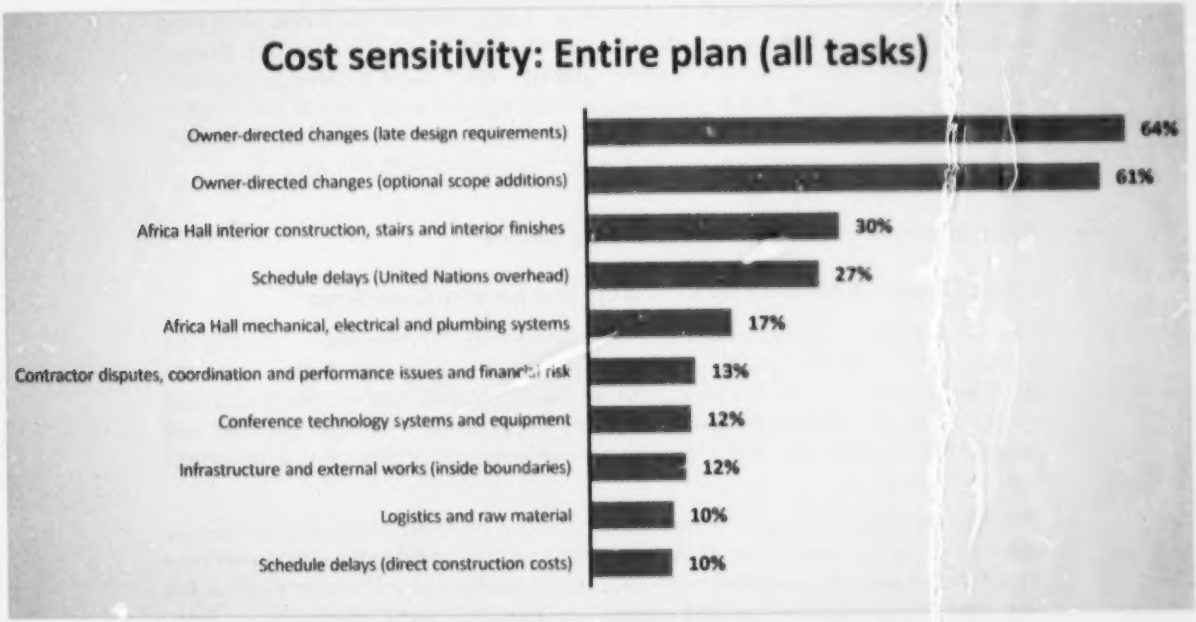
30. Integrated risk management continues to be performed at the local level by the ECA dedicated project management team, with support from the lead consultant firm. The project manager is coordinating the efforts of all parties, in particular the team members, consultant and contractors. Risk owners are assigned to monitor each risk

and to control the implementation of mitigation actions. As part of the regular monitoring activities, such as the weekly site meeting, the risk situation is carefully analysed and discussed. On a monthly basis, the team holds a specific session to update the risk register. Risks are discussed in all meetings with senior management and advisers.

Risk register

31. Building upon the risk register that was established at the onset of the project (see A/72/374, paras. 52–54), the project team refined its current approach to populating and managing the risk register, in line with the newly developed project risk management strategy. All risks are given scores and are assigned a risk owner, and proposed responses are listed. Risks are monitored and controlled by the project team, and in accordance with the risk management strategy, emphasis is placed on addressing the 10 issues that pose the greatest overall risk to the project, the mitigation of which could offer the greatest benefit to the project. A summary of the top 10 risks and their individual potential impact on project costs (cost sensitivity) are shown in figure II below.

Figure II
Cost sensitivity chart: Top 10 risks as of March 2018



32. The cost sensitivity chart in figure II above measures the correlation between individual risk entries and the overall estimate-at-completion amount. The higher the cost sensitivity, the stronger the relationship between the estimate at completion and the individual risk.

Description of project risks having highest cost impact and the proposed risk response

33. The risks with the highest potential impact on the project, identified in the cost sensitivity chart above, are explained in more detail below:

(c) **Owner directed changes** (late design requirements and optional scope additions) — This risk refers to owner requirements that were not captured in baseline design documents and, therefore, could potentially result in additional costs as a change order. Risk mitigation measures focus on attaining stakeholder approvals prior to the issuance of contract design documents to mitigate the chances of receiving change requests later. The project team continuously emphasizes the importance of the Stakeholders Committee's active involvement in the project, in line with the risk management strategy.

(d) **Africa Hall hidden and unpredictable existing building conditions** — The renovation of existing interiors is generally considered riskier than entirely new construction owing to unforeseeable conditions that are embedded in the core nature of such projects, for this project, there is the added component of historic preservation requirements. As a risk mitigation measure, the project team assessed the existing site conditions and performed constructability reviews during design development and incorporated their findings into the final design. In addition, site inspections will be continuously performed during the construction phase to identify potential unknowns as early as possible and to take corrective action or make adjustments, when and if required.

(e) **Schedule delays** — There could be potential delays in implementation, based on construction progress to date for the early works package and on the projected timing for the awarding of the main works contract. As a risk mitigation measure, the project team and the risk owners are regularly adjusting project procedures and clarifying roles and responsibilities with respect to individual actions. In addition, the project team is closely monitoring the work of the early works contractor and will engage the main works contractor (once appointed) to identify ways to potentially shorten the schedule without compromising quality.

G. Progress made during the reporting period

Cooperation with Member States and the host country Government

34. Collaboration between ECA and the host country Government resulted in the signature of a project-specific agreement between the United Nations and the Government of Ethiopia on 13 April 2018. The agreement sets out the operational arrangements for ensuring smooth and rapid processing through customs and importation of materials, while also conferring other privileges related to project implementation.

35. On 5 June 2018, the Addis Ababa mayor's office confirmed both the availability of the parcel of land needed by ECA for visitors' parking and that the city master plan would be adjusted to meet that need. ECA understands that the mayor's office has instructed the relevant specialized entities, such as the Land Commission, to work with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and reflect the details in the city master plan. This matter will be the subject of discussion at the forthcoming coordination meeting with the host country authorities, and the details will be reflected in the lease agreement that will be finalized in the near future.

36. Furthermore, together with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the African Union, the host country Government has defined specific themes for the proposed permanent exhibition space, in particular regarding the historical aspects of Africa Hall.

Voluntary contributions

37. With regard to the contribution already received from Mali (see A/71/370, para. 50), ECA has established a trust fund that will be used to record past and future contributions to the project.

38. Regarding the interest expressed by the Government of Switzerland in making a contribution (see A/72/374, para, 38), discussions continued during the reporting period to define the details. The Swiss authorities opted for their contribution to support, in part, the costs related to the start-up of the visitors' centre and, in part, the costs for operating the visitors' centre during its first year. As of the drafting of the present report, the finalization of the contribution agreement was well under way.

39. During the reporting period, ECA continued to promote the project and made further efforts to seek voluntary contributions through several initiatives. In particular, as previously reported by the Secretary-General (see A/72/374, para. 36), ECA focused on Member States collectively in the context of regional groupings. For that purpose, five meetings were held in May and June 2018. Following those meetings, an expression of interest was received from the Islamic Republic of Iran regarding the options for contributions. Although no concrete offers of voluntary contributions have been received to date, the sessions afforded ECA the opportunity to distribute materials and promote the project, with a view to obtaining voluntary support. A note verbale by which all Member States were encouraged to make voluntary contributions was sent to embassies in Addis Ababa in April 2018.

40. In addition, promotional materials, including a letter from the Executive Secretary, in her role as project owner, with an appeal for voluntary support, were distributed at the most recent Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, held in Addis Ababa in May 2018. ECA will continue to promote the project through such large events and conferences, including at summits of the African Union.

41. Plans are also under way to hold a dedicated voluntary contributions event, coinciding with a milestone in the construction phase of the project, such as a ground-breaking ceremony, at the earliest opportunity.

42. The Partnerships and Resource Mobilization Section of ECA is also developing a comprehensive strategy and related action plan to mobilize resources from the private sector, in accordance with applicable United Nations regulations and rules, as requested by the General Assembly.

43. ECA has also made progress in negotiations with host country authorities to clearly define and agree on the modalities for the provision of in-kind contributions envisaged as part of the land parcel requested for use as visitors' parking.

Procurement activities

44. The project implementation strategy entails breaking down the overall work programme into the following packages: (a) early decanting works; (b) Africa Hall main renovation works; (c) high-tech conference systems and networks; (d) artwork conservation; and (e) the permanent exhibition.

45. An agreement regarding delivery on the early decanting works package, which includes preliminary work, renovation of the Congo Building and related infrastructure works, was signed with a contractor in January 2018, and work commenced in February 2018. That contract was amended in May 2018 to include the external and internal renovation of the Nile Building in the scope of work, following a competitive procurement process.

46. The work on the main renovation of Africa Hall, which is by far the largest implementation package of the project, is scheduled to commence by the end of 2018, following the completion of the procurement process. The awarding of the contract is, as of the drafting of the present report, scheduled for August 2018. However, based on progress to date, it is likely that the contract award date could slip slightly. It is anticipated that construction will commence by the end of 2018 following the completion of the procurement process. The potential schedule slippage is also addressed in the present report under the heading "Risk management".

47. Procurement action for the artwork conservation and restauration package is ongoing and is forecasted to be completed by the end of 2018, which would allow for the execution of some removal work and protective measures before the planned commencement of the Africa Hall main works package.

48. Procurement actions for the high-tech conference systems and networks and the permanent exhibition have yet to be initiated. Related design work is still ongoing and is scheduled for completion by March 2019.

Local knowledge and lessons learned

49. The implementation of the project is aligned with the lessons learned and best practices reflected in the United Nations Guidelines for the Management of Construction Projects. In addition, lessons learned and best practices identified during the project's implementation will be reflected in updates to that document, so that United Nations capital construction projects around the world can also benefit from the lessons learned.

50. Following the proactive participation of the Africa Hall project team in the accessibility task force and the resulting improvement in the quality of design development for the Africa Hall renovation project, the project has been identified by the Secretariat as a best practice and serves as a benchmark for the future development of other projects, including those at the ECA compound. A local institution has also been involved and is proactively taking part in the design process.

Planning and design activities

51. During the reporting period, the lead consultant commenced design services to upgrade information technology systems, including communications technology, audiovisual and conference engineering systems (specifically an independent local area network dedicated to broadcasting system use), adequate wireless network support for meeting participants and an information technology architecture for the network. Those necessary design changes were identified by the end user and executed as an amendment to the contract, following review and acceptance by the Secretariat through the established change control procedures.

52. As part of the scope of stage 3 (pre-construction), the lead consultant has completed the detailed design and tender documentation for the Africa Hall main works package. To ascertain the correctness of the design (i.e., its alignment with the input provided by the client and its compliance with applicable codes and standards), ECA carried out a peer review of the entire dossier through a third-party consultant. The results were satisfactory, with a need to identify and correct only minor issues. The process also identified potential design enhancements with respect to accessibility and fire resistance that are currently under consideration by the design team. They will be incorporated if they can be met within current project budget and schedule constraints. The technical members of the Advisory Board were also involved in the review process. They analysed the design documentation and provided comments and suggestions from the end-user and client perspective, with respect to, for example, functional improvements to the food service design.

53. In response to a request by the General Assembly (see resolution 72/262 A, sect. XII, para. 6), ECA engaged with UNESCO and the African Union, as well as academic and other authorities involved in the heritage conservation sector, to evaluate the solutions proposed in the design and to identify areas for enhancement. The experts that have been engaged, with support from the lead consultant, are coordinating inputs and have submitted a report capturing details of the design as well as the results of the joint analysis conducted by the group. Those details will be referenced when executing the implementation phase of the historic preservation part of the project.

54. Regarding the detailed design of the exhibition area, the experts of the working group that was set up for that purpose have made efforts to involve all institutions that may have an interest and could provide expertise. The completion of the design will allow procurement actions to take place in 2019.

55. In response to the request by the General Assembly to include local knowledge (see resolution 72/262 A, sect. XII, para. 4), ECA has engaged the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Addis Ababa, which recently established a master's program in heritage conservation. Discussions are ongoing to assess the possibility of involving students in the works implementation, either to accompany the implementation of the works themselves (with the exception of monitoring and supervision activities), and/or by arranging regular site visits for students to familiarize them with implementation practices. Given that heritage preservation is a relatively new field in the region, the Secretariat considers the effort to be an important and potentially beneficial outreach and capacity-building activity.

56. With regard to artwork conservation and restoration, the lead consultant has completed the design and technical documentation. As reported above, the procurement process did not yield satisfactory results, and a new procurement exercise will be undertaken.

57. Following a recommendation by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on the reuse of furniture (see A/72/7/Add.26, para. 12), which was endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 72/262 A, ECA, through the lead project consultant, has carried out an in-depth analysis of the state of existing furniture, building on a previous assessment, and all existing furniture has now been recorded. The results showed that some furniture could be reused when implementing the early decanting works package, for example, to refurbish the lobbies. Doing so would result in a furniture reusage level of approximately 60 per cent. Furthermore, when entering the execution phase for the Africa Hall main works package, additional options will be assessed for reusing furniture. Once the furniture needs for the project have been met, the remaining furniture may also be used in other parts of the ECA compound, which will be managed through the facilities management service.

Status of construction efforts

58. The contract for the early decanting works was signed in January 2018. Owing to a delay on the part of contractor in executing the mobilization phase of the contract, the work site could not be handed over to the contractor until April 2018. As indicated in paragraph 45 above, the early decanting works contract was amended in May 2018, and those works are now forecast for completion in February 2019, slightly later than originally planned.

59. With the commencement of the early decanting works package in January 2018, the project formally entered stage 4, the construction stage. Conrad Gargett, an Australian architecture firm and the consultant nominated to lead the project, established a permanent presence and opened an office in the ECA compound for the

delivery of contractual on-site services, which include the provision of technical advisory services and site administration services.

H. Other matters

Accessibility

60. To ensure that equitable access design is in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the project management team has been closely coordinating with the ECA accessibility task force, including by actively participating in the task force's regular meetings since February 2017. ECA is also exchanging examples of best practices with other United Nations offices, in coordination with the Office of Central Support Services.

61. Furthermore, to augment the quality of accessibility design and share experiences on the subject, ECA has had discussions with external partners, including Austrian Development Cooperation and the Ethiopian Centre for Disability and Development. ECA will continue to reach out to these and other potential partners working on the issue to benefit from shared experience and knowledge.

Sustainability

62. As previously reported, in response to a request of the General Assembly (see resolution 72/262 A, sect. XII, para. 7), the project will adhere to current industry best practices for minimizing energy consumption and for increasing efficiencies in the use of water and other resources, which will in turn reduce the long-term operating costs of Africa Hall. The sustainability initiatives in the current design with respect to minimizing energy use include solar-heated water, motion sensors and dimmer controls for intelligent lighting, daylight sensing, passive and mixed-mode ventilation, low solar-transmitting glazing and improved insulation. Water efficiency measures include metered and low-flow plumbing fixtures and water harvesting.

Visitors' centre

63. In respect of the visitors' centre, the General Assembly has encouraged the Secretary-General to refine the underlying assumptions and the calculation for the projected number of visitors to Africa Hall (see resolution 72/262 A, sect. XII, para. 8). Considering that this is a new project, it is suggested that the best time for making more accurate underlying assumptions and a better calculation of the projected number of visitors be at least 12 months after the opening of the visitors' centre. That is because, by then, enough publicity and promotional activities will have been undertaken in Ethiopia and other countries to allow for better estimation of the potential number of visitors to Africa Hall.

64. In addition, the General Assembly has requested the Secretary-General to include an update on the different admission options that could allow access to Africa Hall to a larger number of visitors, especially students, academicians, residents and guests (see resolution 72/262 A, sect. XII, para. 10). It should be noted that Africa Hall is and will primarily continue to be a tourist attraction, which means that the number and types of visitors could in theory be virtually unlimited. But there are a number of primary groups that will be targeted initially for outreach, including students, guests attending conferences at the headquarters of the Economic Commission for Africa and the African Union, diplomats, tourists, ordinary citizens and researchers, among others. As many as 350 conferences, workshops and training activities are held every year at the ECA compound, which could potentially bring many visitors to Africa Hall through the visitor's centre. It is envisaged that, at a later

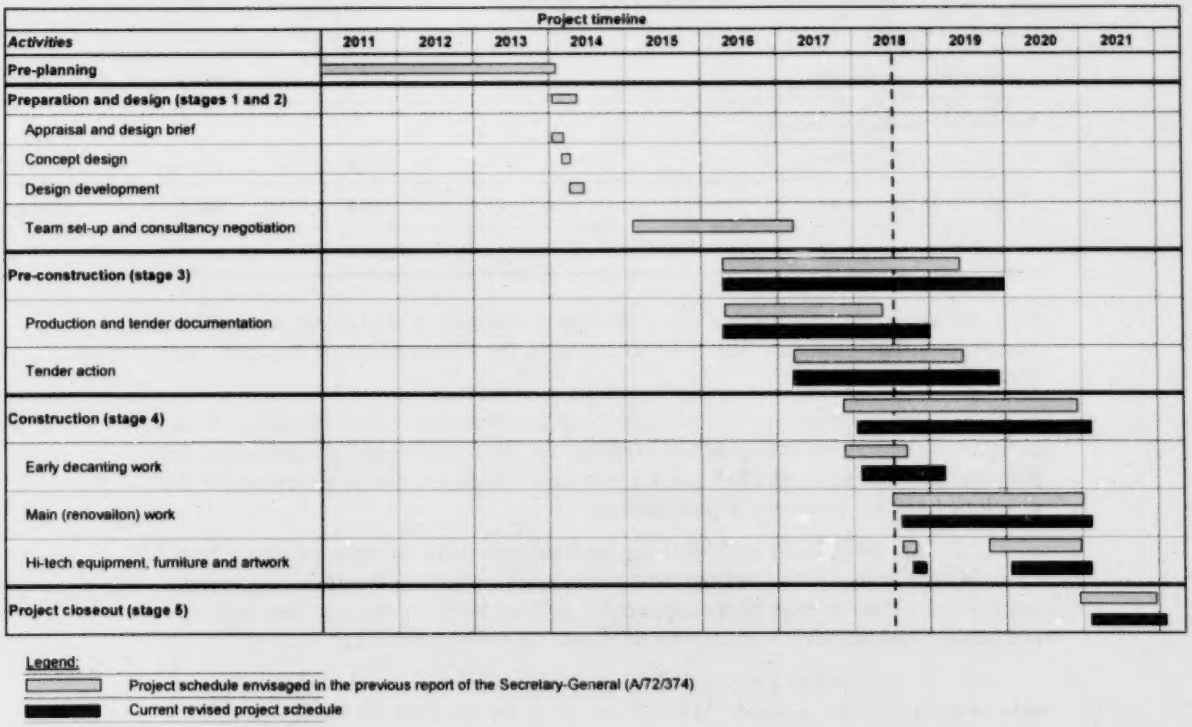
date, groups of potential visitors from other countries, especially those in the region, will also be targeted for outreach.

I. Project schedule updates

65. The project schedule is regularly updated to reflect actual progress, and figure III below shows the latest project schedule as of July 2018. The above-mentioned slippages in commencing stage 4 are reflected as a slight delay in the completion date of the early works package and the project overall. However, the project team is constantly assessing measures such as increasing the contractor's staff and/or extending working hours to fast-track project implementation. Alternative construction methods and/or the use of modern technologies may also be considered. The schedule will be further assessed and adjusted, with input from the Africa Hall main renovation works contractor (once contracted), to potentially mitigate any risk of delays. Although subject to risk, completion by the end of 2021, as initially forecast, is still considered achievable.

66. The project team will continue to support the efforts of the independent risk management firm and provide, among other things, updated schedule information that takes into account any impact resulting from the ongoing procurement process for the Africa Hall main renovation works. The team will also continue to keep the independent risk management firm informed regarding project development and provide the input needed to conduct a risk-based impact analysis of the project schedule and to plan appropriate mitigating measures in advance.

Figure III
Project schedule for the renovation of Africa Hall as of July 2018



J. Project costs

67. The cost plan is monitored closely to identify risks and reflect updates to estimated or actual expenditures, as well as to avoid unforeseen cost overruns and to ensure that expenditures are kept under control.

68. The annex contains detailed information on the latest cost estimate for the entire project. The breakdown of that total cost estimate, as compared with the previous report, is provided in table 1 below.

Table 1
Change in estimated total project costs: comparison of current and previous reporting period figures

(Thousands of United States dollars)

	Current reporting period	*Previous reporting period (see A/72/374)*	*Difference*
	(a)	*(b)*	*(c)=(a)-(b)*
Section 33, Construction, alteration, improvement and major maintenance			
1. Construction costs	35 424.2	31 443.0	3 981.2
2. Professional services	6 693.8	6 517.4	176.4
3. Escalation	1 373.8	5 706.4	(4 332.6)
4. Contingency	8 271.1	8 173.8	97.3
Subtotal, section 33	**51 762.9**	**51 840.6**	**(77.7)**
Section 18, Economic and social development in Africa			
5. Project management	4 716.6	4 454.9	261.7
Subtotal, section 18	**4 716.6**	**4 454.9**	**261.7**
Section 34, Safety and security			
6. Security requirements	416.8	600.8	(184.0)
Subtotal, section 34	**416.8**	**600.8**	**(184.0)**
Total	**56 896.3**	**56 896.3**	**–**

69. Although the amount of the total cost estimate remains unchanged, its composition has changed. The main changes in the composition of the total cost estimate are as follows:

(a) An increase of $3,981,200 for construction costs resulting from: (i) updated figures reflecting actual contract values for the early decanting works package; and (ii) updated 2018 main works cost estimates, which are based on the developed design, with escalation absorbed;

(b) An increase of $176,400 for professional services costs resulting from: (i) additional design efforts related to upgrades to conference systems and equipment; and (ii) reductions in third party support for independent risk management services, independent design reviews and other professional support services;

(c) A decrease of $ 4,332,600 for projected escalation costs, which have now been absorbed by the updated 2018 cost estimates for the main works contract;

(d) An increase of $97,300 for the contingency budget, which has been calculated by applying an additional 20 per cent rate on top of the revised/updated construction trade costs, professional services costs and escalation costs;

(e) An increase of $261,700 for project management costs, reflecting the refinement of cost calculations based on actual expenditures and updated estimates;

(f) A decrease of $184,000 for security requirements, reflecting the refinement of cost calculations for six security officers based on actual expenditures and updated estimates.

K. Project expenditures and anticipated costs

Status of expenditures and projected expenditures for 2018

70. The General Assembly approved appropriations of $13,438,600 for the project in its resolution 70/248 A, $37,600 for the physical security of the project by its resolution 71/272 A, and $5,700,300 in its resolution 72/262 A. The total approved project funding until the end of 2018 is $19,176,500.

71. Table 2 below shows the actual project expenditures as at 30 June 2018, the projected expenditures for the remainder of 2018, and the projected unused balance at the end of 2018. As shown, total projected expenditures for the period 2016–2018 amount to $10,351,500.

Table 2
Status of expenditures as at 30 June 2018 and projection for the remainder of 2018
(Thousands of United States dollars)

	Appropriated project funding for 2016–2018	*Cumulative expenditure from project start-up to 30 June 2018*	*Projected expenditures from 1 July to 31 December 2018*	*Total projected expenditures for 2016–2018*	*Projected unused balance at the end of 2018*
	(a)	*(b)*	*(c)*	*(d) = (b) + (c)*	*(e) = (a)-(d)*
Section 33, Construction, alteration, improvement and major maintenance					
1. Construction costs	9 050.0	29.1	3 029.7	3 058.8	5 991.2
2. Professional services	4 556.9	4 057.6	113.8	4 171.3	385.6
3. Escalation	880.4	-	5.5	5.5	874.9
4. Contingency	2 342.6	-	885.8	885.8	1 456.9
Subtotal, section 33	**16 829.9**	**4 086.7**	**4 034.8**	**8 121.5**	**8 708.5**
Section 18, Economic and social development in Africa					
5. Project management	2 158.7	1 570.5	542.8	2 113.2	45.5
Subtotal, section 18	**2 158.7**	**1 570.5**	**542.8**	**2 113.2**	**45.5**
Section 34, Safety and security					
6. Security requirements	187.8	67.3	49.5	116.8	71.0
Subtotal, section 34	**187.8**	**67.3**	**49.5**	**116.8**	**71.0**
Total	**19 176.4**	**5 724.5**	**4 627.1**	**10 351.5**	**8 825.0**

72. As shown in table 2 above, there is expected to be a balance of $8,825,000 remaining unused at the end of 2018, owing to delays in the commencement of construction activities.

Resource requirements for 2019

73. The resource requirements for 2019 are shown in table 3 below. The total projected expenditure for 2019 amounts to $17,756,100, comprising:

(a) $16,646,100 under section 33, Construction, alteration, improvement and major maintenance, for building costs (including infrastructure, the Africa Hall main building, the visitors' centre and external works), conference and information technology systems, and escalation and contingency provisions (shown as separated from base costs);

(b) $1,010,000 under section 18, Economic and social development in Africa, for the continuation of the approved project management team;

(c) $100,000 under section 34, Safety and security, for the continuation of the six approved security officers.

Table 3
Resource requirements for 2019
(Thousands of United States dollars)

	Projected expenditures in 2019	*Projected unused balance at the end of 2018*	*Net funding requirement for 2019*
	(a)	*(b)*	*(c)=(a)-(b)*
Section 33, Construction, alteration, improvement and major maintenance			
1. Construction costs	12 513.0	5 991.2	6 521.8
2. Professional services	998.3	385.6	612.7
3. Escalation	316.7	874.9	(558.2)
4. Contingency	2 818.1	1 456.9	1 361.3
Subtotal, section 33	**16 646.1**	**8 708.5**	**7 937.6**
Section 18, Economic and social development in Africa			
5. Project management	1 010.0	45.5	964.5
Subtotal section 18	**1 010.0**	**45.5**	**964.5**
Section 34, Safety and security			
6. Security requirements	100.0	71.0	29.0
Subtotal, section 34	**100.0**	**71.0**	**29.0**
Total	**17 756.1**	**8 825.0**	**8 931.1**

74. Taking into account the projected unused balance of $8,825,000 at the end of 2018, the net funding requirements in 2019 would amount to $8,931,100, comprising: (a) $964,500 under section 18, Economic and social development in Africa; (b) $7,937,600 under section 33, Construction, alteration, improvement and major maintenance; and (c) $29,000 under section 34, Safety and security.

L. Next steps

75. Actions to be realized during the next reporting period include:

(a) Completion of the early works and the decanting of the tenants who currently occupy the Africa Hall main building;

(b) Awarding of the contract and commencement of the Africa Hall main renovation works and artwork restoration;

(c) Completion of the design and tender dossiers for the conference engineering systems;

(d) Definition of exhibit themes and completion of the permanent exhibition's design;

(e) Signing of an amendment to the lease agreement with the host country Government to define the use and development of the additional land needed for the new visitors' parking area.

III. Recommended actions to be taken by the General Assembly

76. **The General Assembly is requested to:**

(a) **Take note of the progress made since the issuance of the previous report of the Secretary-General;**

(b) **Take note of the revised cost plan for the project;**

(c) **Appropriate a net amount of $8,931,100 for project activities in 2019, comprising: $964,500 under section 18, Economic and social development in Africa; $7,937,600 under section 33, Construction, alteration, improvement and major maintenance; and $29,000 under section 34, Safety and security, of the programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019, which would represent a charge against the contingency fund.**

Annex

Revised cost plan

(Thousands of United States dollars)

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total
Section 33, Construction, alteration, improvement and major maintenance							
1. Construction costs							
1.1 Building costs	–	–	1 111.8	10 750.4	10 431.5	5 520.0	27 813.7
1.2 Decanting works	–	–	1 897.0	162.5	–	–	2 059.5
1.3 Conference and information technology systems				1 500.0	1 350.0	1 050.0	3 900.0
1.4 Artwork restoration			50.0	100.0	650.0	150.0	950.0
1.5 Permanent exhibition (curatorial)				–	600.0	101.0	701.0
2. Professional services							
2.1 Lead consultancy firm	2 760.1	61.1	1 200.0	953.1	650.0	777.0	6 401.2
2.2 Risk management			73.1	20.2	20.2	26.9	140.4
2.3 Other services	3.5	64.7	8.9	25.0	25.0	25.0	152.1
3. Escalation			5.5	316.7	623.7	427.9	1 373.8
4. Contingency			885.8	2 818.1	2 924.6	1 642.5	8 271.1
Subtotal, section 33	**2 763.6**	**125.8**	**5 232.1**	**16 646.0**	**17 275.0**	**9 720.3**	**51 762.8**
Section 18, Economic and social development in Africa							
5. Project management							
5.1 Dedicated project management and support team	320.7	869.1	685.9	809.2	819.2	414.2	3 918.3
5.2 Dedicated coordinator at Headquarters	–	14.2	90.8	90.8	90.8	90.8	377.4
5.3 Consultancies and expertise	–	5.6	70.0	90.0	89.9	48.5	304.0
5.4 Travel of project management team	16.5	20.5	20.0	20.0	20.0	20.0	117.0
Subtotal, sections 18	**337.2**	**909.3**	**866.7**	**1 010.0**	**1 019.9**	**573.5**	**4 716.7**
Section 34, Safety and security							
6. Security requirements		26.8	90.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	416.8
Subtotal, section 34	**–**	**26.8**	**90.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**416.8**
Total	**3 100.8**	**1 061.9**	**6 188.8**	**17 756.0**	**18 394.9**	**10 393.8**	**56 896.3**

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Strengthening of the United Nations system: central role of the United Nations system in global governance

The United Nations in global economic governance

Report of the Secretary-General**

Summary

The present report was prepared in response to General Assembly resolution 71/327, entitled "The United Nations in global economic governance", in consultation with Member States and relevant organizations of the United Nations system.

Following the adoption in 2015 of landmark agreements, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the United Nations has played a role in contributing to norm- and standard-setting in support of global economic governance and advanced efforts to manage global economic challenges through multilateral approaches, in line with the demands of the 2030 Agenda. To achieve these objectives, the United Nations has strengthened its engagement with international institutions and pursued avenues to improve coordination and coherence in global economic governance. The Organization's efforts are based on the recognition that global economic governance is characterized by disparate arrangements and that all such efforts need to be channelled towards economic governance for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

* A/73/150.

** The present report was submitted late in order to reflect the latest information.

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 71/327, entitled "The United Nations in global economic governance", the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit a report including concrete options for closer interaction between the United Nations and intergovernmental groupings, to be prepared in consultation with Member States and relevant organizations of the United Nations system, taking into account the Sustainable Development Goals and the follow-up processes to all major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields, as appropriate. The present report is submitted in response to that request.

2. As mandated, the Secretary-General undertook wide-ranging consultations with Member States and relevant United Nations system entities, from which divergent views emerged.[1] With regard to trade, some Member States raised concerns over the increase in protectionist measures and the potential effects on the efforts of countries to advance sustainable development. With respect to the role of the United Nations in supporting global economic governance, some highlighted the fact that the United Nations plays an important role in the promotion of coherence and cooperation in support of the implementation of global agreements, including by contributing to the efforts of countries to address global challenges. Others saw the role of the United Nations in global economic governance as being limited to addressing matters that fall within the Organization's mandates. A number of Member States highlighted the importance of strengthening the voice of developing countries in global economic governance. Some countries also stressed the need to further align global economic governance arrangements with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

3. This plurality of views is mirrored by the current structure of global economic governance arrangements. Global economic governance has been characterized by disparate arrangements, with norm-setting and policy coordination roles spread across a variety of global entities and arrangements. Through the adoption in 2015 of landmark agreements, including the 2030 Agenda, the international community underlined its commitment to jointly address global challenges. In the 2030 Agenda, it is fully acknowledged that national development efforts need to be supported by an enabling international economic environment, including coherent and mutually supporting world trade, monetary and financial systems. In this context, strengthening coordination and coherence has become increasingly relevant in the pursuit of efforts to ensure that global economic governance arrangements are conducive to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and related agreements.

4. The United Nations has played a role in contributing to norm- and standard-setting in support of global economic governance, including on a number of global challenges that require multilateral approaches to address them, such as aligning financing with the Sustainable Development Goals, harnessing science, technology and innovation for sustainable development, supporting countries in special situations, measuring progress through accurate, reliable and timely statistics, and readying the United Nations to most effectively achieve these objectives. The United Nations has also strengthened its engagement with international financial and trade institutions and pursued avenues to improve coordination and coherence in global economic governance, including through its engagement with the Group of 20.

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[1] The present report follows three previous reports of the Secretary-General on global economic governance and development (A/66/506, A/67/769 and A/71/378). A request was sent to Member States seeking their views on the issue, and contributions were received from relevant United Nations organizations. The contributions can be reviewed at www.un.org/esa/ffd/topics/global-economic-governance/geg-73ga.html.

II. Globalization and its implications for global economic governance

5. In an increasingly interconnected world, effective global economic governance arrangements are of critical importance for the success of efforts to achieve sustainable development in all countries. Since the world financial and economic crisis of 2008, efforts to strengthen global economic coordination have gathered momentum with the aim of avoiding the recurrence of such a crisis and continuing to promote global economic stability.

6. In this context, three narratives on globalization have received particular attention in the global discourse. First, the advancement of globalization has benefited some, while leaving others behind. Rising inequalities have been at the heart of this trend. While there are variations across regions, the gap between the richest and the poorest has been widening in the majority of countries. Between 1980 and 2016, the top 1 per cent richest individuals saw twice as much growth in their incomes as the bottom 50 per cent.[2] It is widely perceived that increases in inequality within countries have advanced in sync with globalization.

7. The unequal distribution of the costs and benefits of globalization is also reflected in the divergent progress in other areas of sustainable development, including access to health and education, the empowerment of women and environmental sustainability. This inequality of opportunity and outcome has eroded trust, especially in public institutions, fuelling alienation and stoking economic fears. Through a poll conducted in 2017, it was found that fears surrounding economic prospects had increased in many countries, with economic pessimism on the rise.[3]

8. In an increasingly interconnected world, people's perceptions of their economic well-being are closely connected to the perceived fairness, effectiveness and impartiality of economic governance arrangements. Imbalances and regulatory gaps, in particular at the global level, need to be addressed with renewed urgency. Global institutions have a key role to play in supporting Member States to achieve more balanced, equitable and sustainable growth that benefits all. To achieve this, policy coordination needs to be strengthened at the global level to support inclusive growth in the short term and sustainable development in the long term.

9. Second, shared global norms and standards remain fundamental to supporting the advancement of sustainable development. It is widely acknowledged that many of the challenges associated with globalization transcend national boundaries and that multilateral approaches are required to support Governments in addressing transnational problems. The recent international agreements, including the 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development and the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, represent a strong normative framework and blueprint for addressing a wide range of global challenges, including rising inequalities, financial instability and the impacts of climate change.

10. Third, there is ongoing momentum with respect to strengthening the effectiveness of global institutions that deal with macroeconomic and financial stability, trade, finance and development in response to a changing global context. Institutional reforms are under way by many organizations, including the United Nations, to strengthen their effectiveness to deliver on the landmark global agreements. International institutions have also advanced their reforms by seeking to

[2] See Facundo Alvaredo and others, "World inequality report 2018", World Inequality Lab, 2017.
[3] Gallup International, "Happiness, hope, economic optimism: Gallup International's 41st annual global end of year survey", 2017.

adapt to the emergence of new global actors that challenge State-centric notions of governance.

11. Overall, these three narratives underline the importance of fostering multilateral approaches to support the advancement of sustainable development. To fulfil the mandates set out in the global agreements, renewed efforts are necessary to improve coordination and coherence in the dispersed global economic governance landscape and to arrive at a stronger, more coherent, more inclusive and representative international architecture for sustainable development.

III. Managing global economic challenges through multilateral approaches

12. In a highly globalized world, effective global economic governance should promote actions at all levels that advance sustainable development. Addressing challenges to global economic stability benefits all countries and requires inclusive, transparent and effective multilateral approaches. While national efforts are central to achieving sustainable development, many of the most urgent existing and emerging problems are common to many countries, transcend borders and cannot be addressed in isolation. Rather, joint action through common solutions to such challenges and an enabling international economic environment remain critical for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

13. The United Nations remains responsive to the diverse needs of Member States as they encounter obstacles to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, many of which require strengthened global economic arrangements. The United Nations contributes to this by promoting dialogue, setting norms and standards and ensuring coherence in its operational work. Outlined below are selected challenges that are relevant to economic governance arrangements to which the United Nations, together with key partners, is promoting multilateral approaches, namely, financing the Sustainable Development Goals, harnessing the benefits of science, technology and innovation, supporting countries in special situations and measuring progress through strengthened statistics. A reformed United Nations that is better positioned to respond to the needs of Member States and take preventive approaches to global challenges will be critical in these efforts.

A. Aligning finance with the Sustainable Development Goals

14. Global economic governance arrangements that are conducive to supporting the 2030 Agenda could unlock resources and fill the sustainable development financing gap. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda provides a framework for action in a range of areas where effective governance measures can mobilize finance and align it with the Sustainable Development Goals. In that regard, the United Nations strongly advocates a financing system that helps to steer financial flows towards investments that generate greater inclusivity and sustainability.

15. Since 2015, the progress made in mobilizing resources for the 2030 Agenda has exposed some key obstacles. National and international economic and financial policies need urgently to be aligned with the 2030 Agenda. Doing so requires concerted efforts at the appropriate levels — national, regional and international — to mobilize and leverage all available resources in national and global economies. This is urgent for both public and private sources of financing given the immense scale of resources needed to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

Long-term investments

16. A stable global economy and financial system, aided by better alignment of incentive structures to promote the Sustainable Development Goals across the financial system, could help to support sustainable long-term investment. Existing incentives in the financial system encourage investment that is predominantly short-term oriented. This is at odds with the Sustainable Development Goals, which are integrated across economic, social and environmental dimensions and require the costs of longer-term risks, stemming from climate change, among others, to be factored into decision-making. Furthermore, long-term investment in sustainable development remains a relatively small proportion of total investments, and impediments to reaching countries with the greatest needs remain.

17. While national actions are critical, in particular with regard to institutions, the rule of law and regulatory frameworks, they need to be complemented by an enabling environment that encourages long-term, high-quality investments, in particular in developing countries. The financial system itself needs be made fit for purpose, which would require financial policymakers, central banks, stock exchanges, rating agencies and other relevant actors to support its alignment with the needs of the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement. Financial regulation and policymaking need to be reoriented towards broader aims, such as access to long-term finance and a substantial increase in sustainable investment. The United Nations aims to work more closely with all partners, including central banks and financial regulatory bodies, to ensure that the impact of economic and financial policies on the 2030 Agenda are fully considered.

18. The significant momentum that has gathered around sustainable investment since 2015 could be built upon. Improved norms to encourage long-term sustainable development are critical, and the United Nations is actively working to support a better understanding of this issue in response to the lack of common definitions, standards and practices related to sustainable finance.

19. Systemic de-risking is also important for aligning and scaling up finance for the Sustainable Development Goals. The United Nations will continue to play its role in de-risking investments, in particular in developing countries in special situations, by supporting sustainable development, peace and security and humanitarian assistance. The effectiveness of the Organization's work in these areas should contribute to lowering policy and institutional risks for long-term investors.

International tax cooperation

20. Taxation is a key means of mobilizing domestic revenue to finance the Sustainable Development Goals, and many countries have made great strides in enhancing revenue administration through various measures. Efforts to strengthen progressive fiscal systems in line with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda can help to tackle inequalities. Taxes also offer incentives and can spur private investment towards the Goals. National experiences have demonstrated that medium-term strategies for tax system reform can help to drive the changes needed for more effective and efficient public financial management and service delivery.[4]

21. At the same time, large mobilization gaps remain, and the strengthening of international tax cooperation could help to support national efforts, especially in countries in special situations. In the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, it is stated that efforts in international tax cooperation should be universal in approach and scope and fully account for the different needs and capacities of all countries. In this regard, the

[4] See Inter-Agency Task Force on Financing for Development, *Financing for Development: Progress and Prospects 2018* (New York, United Nations, 2018).

Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters has a critical role to play in supporting the creation of norms and standards. The United Nations is also continuing its work within the Platform for Collaboration on Tax, an inter-agency joint effort with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the World Bank Group, to intensify cooperation on tax issues.

22. With respect to value-added tax (VAT), progress has been relatively quick. There is now broad consensus that VAT should, in principle, be paid where consumption takes place. This means that foreign enterprises that supply digital goods and services to a country's consumers should collect VAT from those consumers and remit it to that country's tax authority. A number of developed and developing countries have taken the lead on this, but the necessary changes have not been adopted by all, for reasons including a lack of capacity.

23. Progress has been much slower with respect to corporate taxation, where the internationally agreed rules that are incorporated into bilateral tax treaties still require some form of physical presence in a country before that country can gain the ability to tax. Digitalization is challenging this framework since physical presence is no longer needed to conduct substantial business activities within a country. There is a growing sense of urgency among many countries around this issue as the digital economy expands and adapts.

Illicit financial flows

24. There are also significant concerns regarding the detrimental impact of illicit financial flows, especially those caused by tax evasion, corruption and transnational organized crime. Developing countries are hit the hardest by illicit financial flows. As a result, the level of resources available for sustainable development is severely constrained. Policy dialogue on the promotion of international cooperation to combat illicit financial flows has advanced substantively, including in the General Assembly with the recent adoption of resolution 72/207.

25. Many of the reforms being discussed through international tax cooperation should contribute to the prevention of illicit financial flows. Improved sharing of good practices and closer collaboration on this issue should be stepped up at the United Nations and other relevant multilateral and international organizations, as appropriate. The Platform for Collaboration on Tax is an important initiative in support of these efforts.

26. The United Nations Convention against Corruption provides a set of norms and standards that could help to address the challenge of illicit financial flows. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime is providing important technical assistance to support the efforts of Member States in that regard, including on asset recovery.

B. Harnessing the benefits of science, technology and innovation

27. While the deployment of new technologies has the potential to support the 2030 Agenda and the action areas of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, such as through digital finance and financial technology ("fintech"), many new technologies are posing a challenge to regulatory frameworks and authorities that aim to protect consumers and ensure that benefits are broadly shared.

28. Financial system regulation needs to take fintech into account. National regulatory authorities and international institutions could collaborate to develop international standards and practices for the use of fintech that maximize its potential

while addressing related risks.[5] To better understand how these benefits can be harnessed, the Inter-Agency Task Force on Financing for Development is examining the implications of fintech and the weightless economy on financial inclusion, access to finance and financial regulation to determine how to adapt related policies.

29. Dialogue among different regulatory authorities is also under way as part of the Financial Inclusion Global Initiative, led by the International Telecommunication Union, the World Bank Group and the Committee on Payments and Market Infrastructures of the Bank for International Settlements. One of the aims of this initiative is to enable national authorities in developing and emerging markets to harness the potential of digital technologies for financial inclusion and manage associated risks.

30. Analytical work produced by the United Nations is increasingly focused on the need to direct technological change and innovation towards inclusive and sustainable outcomes through public efforts, in collaboration with civil society, business and academia. The United Nations inter-agency task team on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals, convened by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, and the United Nations 10-Member Group to support the Technology Facilitation Mechanism have been working towards assessing the impacts of exponential technological change on the Sustainable Development Goals. Their efforts have mobilized many scientists and experts, and their interim findings have fed into various forums, such as the multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals, which facilitates interaction among relevant stakeholders on technology needs and gaps, as well as on the development, transfer and dissemination of relevant technologies for the Goals.

C. Supporting countries in special situations

31. Effective global economic governance can help to ensure that the diverse needs and challenges faced by countries in special situations are addressed. One specific concern that has been raised in this regard stems from the graduation of countries from concessional financing windows. International cooperation has proved to be critical in supporting the transition process for graduating countries. The international community could build upon these efforts, including through potential flexibilities that would allow countries access to appropriate sources of financing, depending on country needs and vulnerabilities.

32. With respect to the least developed countries, the United Nations system is assisting graduating countries by cataloguing the available sources of concessional funding and supporting access to private capital and investment, as well as by strengthening local capital markets. Some of these measures are reflected in the Support Measures Portal for Least Developed Countries. This resource is complemented by Gradjet, an online platform launched in 2018 by the United Nations for graduating least developed countries. The platform could be used by the Governments of such countries, as well as other stakeholders, such as United Nations system entities and multilateral and bilateral partners, to build and share information and knowledge on the graduation process and recommended activities at each stage.

33. Middle-income countries also face challenges in their exclusion from concessional windows, such as the "soft windows" of the multilateral development banks. In recognition of the fact that broader assessments of progress, beyond crossing per capita income thresholds, might be needed, numerous measures have

[5] Ibid.

been proposed or put in place to address these challenges. These include the inclusion by the International Development Association of the World Bank of a "small State exception" and other challenges in its multidimensional assessment of country contexts and needs, as well as the use by multilateral development banks of creditworthiness criteria based on the comprehensive macroeconomic picture within countries, factoring in debt risks and other aspects.[6] Improved knowledge-sharing and cooperation among the various actors involved with regard to opportunities for coordination and coherence could help to ensure that the diverse challenges faced by countries are effectively managed across the graduation processes.

D. Measuring progress through accurate, reliable and timely statistics

34. More and disaggregated data help to underpin effective global economic governance and will allow policymakers to make more informed decisions to better implement policies and programmes. For example, multiple indicators, including under Goals 10 and 17 of the Sustainable Development Goals, directly relate to and support the monitoring of global economic governance. Significant efforts are required to strengthen national statistical capacities, and such efforts should be coordinated and coherent.

35. The System of National Accounts, which has been adopted by the Statistical Commission, provides, together with related standards, the internationally agreed standard set of recommendations on how to compile measures of economic activity in accordance with strict accounting conventions based on economic principles. Most recently, as mandated by the Statistical Commission, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs has been working together with partners, including the United Nations regional commissions and other organizations and international organizations, to facilitate the implementation of the System in Member States.

36. Enhancing the capacity of Member States to improve the compilation of their national accounts and supporting statistics will help them to improve the quality and reliability of those indicators for the Sustainable Development Goals related to economic statistics. Initiatives that have been undertaken include the resolution of research issues pertaining to the implementation of the System of National Accounts 2008, the provision of technical assistance to Member States, the organization of statistical capacity-building workshops and the completion of manuals, handbooks and guidelines.

37. With regard to the Group of 20 Data Gaps Initiative, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs is working, together with the other member organizations of the Inter-Agency Group on Economic and Financial Statistics, to implement recommendations on the regular collection and dissemination of reliable and timely economic and financial statistics for policy use in the Group of 20 economies. The recommendations are clustered under the following three main headings: (a) monitoring risk in the financial sector; (b) vulnerabilities, interconnections and spillovers; and (c) data-sharing and the communication of official statistics. The Inter-Agency Group was established in 2008 to coordinate statistical issues and data gaps highlighted by the global crisis and to strengthen data collection.

38. There is also a need to increase the understanding of globalization with respect to global value chains and trade in value added. As mandated by Statistical Commission, the Expert Group on International Trade and Economic Globalization Statistics is developing a handbook to provide a high-level overview of how economic statistics can be made more accurate and relevant in measuring the effects of

[6] Ibid.

globalization in national accounts and business statistics through a global value chain framework. The Expert Group consists of more than 30 experts in the fields of national accounts and business statistics from national and international statistical organizations. The handbook will complement other initiatives undertaken at the regional and international levels, such as the extensive work under the Trade in Value Added project of OECD and the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the Eurostat Full International and Global Accounts for Research in Input-Output Analysis project and framework regulation integrating business statistics.

39. The global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals was developed by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators, under the auspices of the Statistical Commission, and adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 71/313. The indicator framework addresses all the Goals and targets, including means of implementation.

E. Readying the United Nations

40. Global economic governance arrangements that support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals require relevant international organizations to provide coherent and coordinated support to Member States, as appropriate. The Secretary-General is undertaking a comprehensive reform of the United Nations to provide effective normative guidance and a strong institutional framework to support Member States in implementing the 2030 Agenda. This vision puts sustainable development at the heart of the Organization's work by ensuring that its efforts towards development, peace and security and human rights reinforce each other and deliver results for the people it serves, leaving no one behind.

IV. Engagement with international financial and trade institutions

41. The momentum has been built since 2015 for strengthened engagement of the United Nations with international financial and trade institutions, including the Bretton Woods institutions. Such efforts have been made in the context of institutional reforms undertaken to more closely align organizational structures with the imperatives of advancing sustainable development, in accordance with each organization's specific mandates.

42. IMF has implemented quota and governance reforms under the fourteenth General Review of Quotas. As part of this reform, quota shares have shifted from overrepresented to underrepresented member countries. The World Bank has advanced a set of reforms to enhance the voice and participation of developing and transition countries in the World Bank Group, notably through an increase in voting power, and realigned shareholding in line with economic weight and development contributions. While some countries have called for institutional reform of the WTO system, no consensus has been reached on reform efforts. WTO itself has, however, taken steps to more closely align its operations with global development objectives, recognizing the role of trade in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.[7]

43. Reforms to financial system oversight have been advanced to address existing regulatory gaps and misaligned incentives in the international financial system that emerged in the wake of the world financial and economic crisis of 2008. The Financial Stability Board and the financial regulatory standard-setting bodies monitor the

[7] See World Trade Organization, *Mainstreaming Trade to Attain the Sustainable Development Goals* (Geneva, World Trade Organization, 2018).

implementation of post-crisis regulatory reforms, as well as the impact of reforms on financial intermediation. Several systems are currently in place that aim to promote macroeconomic stability and mitigate risks, including early warning systems, macroeconomic policy coordination and global standards for regulation of the financial system. The main international process for monitoring vulnerabilities in the global financial system is undertaken jointly by IMF and the Financial Stability Board, the latter being focused primarily on financial markets and institutions.[8]

Supporting the achievement of the 2030 Agenda

44. The United Nations has stepped up its engagement with key stakeholders in support of the coherent and effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

45. A concrete example of collaboration is the engagement of major stakeholders in the Inter-Agency Task Force on Financing for Development, which is mandated to follow up on the Addis Ababa Action Agenda by reporting annually on progress in implementing the Agenda and other financing for development outcomes and on the means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda, as well as by advising the intergovernmental follow-up process on progress, implementation gaps and recommendations for corrective action. Among the 58 members of the Inter-Agency Task Force are the World Bank Group, IMF, WTO, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs acting as the coordinator. In addition to these major institutional stakeholders in the area of financing for development, the Inter-Agency Task Force includes agencies such as the Basel Committee on Banking Supervision, the Financial Stability Board and OECD.

46. To strengthen coordination and coherence on a number of priority issues for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the United Nations and the World Bank Group have stepped up collaboration through the United Nations-World Bank Group Strategic Partnership Framework for the 2030 Agenda, signed in May 2018. The partnership initiatives encompass effectively mobilizing finance and implementation capacity for the Sustainable Development Goals, including climate finance; improving implementation through joint initiatives and local capacity-building; supporting action at the nexus between peacebuilding, humanitarian action and development assistance; and collecting and utilizing data in a way that supports greater targeting for development impact.

47. In the area of peace and security and sustainable development, the "Pathways for peace" report of United Nations system entities and the World Bank represents a joint approach to strengthen engagement on critical issues of global importance, drawing upon the comparative advantages and complementary mandates of different institutions. IMF has undertaken efforts to strengthen its policy work with fragile and conflict-affected States. In line with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, IMF has also expanded its macroeconomic policy advice and technical assistance to help countries to tackle infrastructure gaps.

48. Efforts have been advanced to bring together the expertise of key actors, including the private sector, civil society and academia, as well as the World Bank and IMF, to tap the potential of the data revolution for monitoring progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. A concrete example of such efforts is the joint initiative of UNDP, the United Nations Children's Fund and the World Bank to support the monitoring and reporting of national multidimensional poverty in the

[8] See Inter-Agency Task Force on Financing for Development, *Financing for Development: Progress and Prospects 2018*.

ontext of the Goals. Building upon such initiatives, further efforts are needed to harmonize approaches to measure critical indicators at the global level.

49. In the financing for development sphere, the United Nations and the World Bank Group have strengthened coherence and coordination in assisting countries to build enabling environments, obtain access to transformational finance and scale up proven solutions. In mobilizing resources for sustainable development, multilateral development banks can play a critical role in supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda by providing long-term concessional and non-concessional financing for public good investments, including in areas of the Sustainable Development Goals such as sustainable and resilient infrastructure, innovation and lending to micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises. To advance climate action, the United Nations and the World Bank have been supporting countries through the Nationally Determined Contributions Partnership to support the implementation of country-specific nationally determined contributions.

50. Where gaps remain, further efforts are needed to strengthen collaboration and engagement among major actors in global economic governance. The United Nations and international and regional financial institutions could step up their collaboration in the field of disaster risk reduction and financing, as disaster risk and the economic losses from disasters are increasing. To support vulnerable countries in optimizing their capacities to mitigate and manage disaster and climate risks, the United Nations has been working closely with the World Bank and others to implement flagship initiatives, such as the Global Preparedness Partnership and the Insurance Development Forum.

V. Coordination and coherence in global economic governance

51. Consistent with the requirements of the new development agenda and the mandates of the General Assembly, the United Nations has been strengthening its engagement with intergovernmental groupings that make policy recommendations or take policy decisions with global implications, in order to support coordination and coherence in the push to advance sustainable development.

52. The United Nations has also sought to strengthen its engagement with its regional partners that have been key players in the dispersed global economic governance space, with the aim of supporting global economic governance on matters pertaining to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. Recent initiatives to strengthen cooperation include the African Union-United Nations Framework for the Implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. To strengthen coordination in line with the demands of the 2030 Agenda, the United Nations has also increased its engagement with other regional partners, including the Caribbean Community, the European Union and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). The plan of action to implement the Joint Declaration on Comprehensive Partnership between ASEAN and the United Nations for 2016–2020 was adopted at the ASEAN-United Nations Ministerial Meeting in 2016. Examples of joint work plans that have been developed under the plan of action include the joint strategic plan on disaster management for 2016–2020 and the ASEAN-United Nations environment and climate change action plan for 2016–2020.

A. Engagement with the Group of 20

53. The Group of 20 maintains close relationships with international organizations, including the United Nations. International organizations, at the invitation of the Group, provide expert advice on matters within their competence. United Nations

engagement with the Group is firmly anchored in development. In fact, development has been on the Group's agenda for more than a decade, in line with its original mandate to promote stable and sustainable world economic growth that benefits all. Over the years, the Group has embraced an incrementally growing agenda, with increasing involvement in multilateral issues where the United Nations plays a central role.

54. Overall, the engagement of the United Nations with the Group of 20 has increased steadily since the elevation of the Group to a summit of leaders in 2008. Such engagement takes place at various levels. At the intergovernmental level, United Nations intergovernmental bodies, processes and forums provide a platform for the Group to interact with countries that are not members of the Group. Presidencies of the Group regularly give briefings to the General Assembly before and after the Group's summits. Under recent presidencies, new channels have been explored to interact with countries that are not members of the Group at the United Nations. For example, under the German and Argentine presidencies, special events were organized during the high-level political forum on sustainable development to share the work of the Group on sustainable development.

55. In addition, the Secretary-General has participated in all Group of 20 summits since 2008. The Secretary-General is represented by the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs on the Group's Sherpa track and by the Administrator of UNDP on the finance track. United Nations entities also support the work of working groups and task forces of the Group at the invitation of presidencies of the Group. In these contexts, the United Nations has consistently focused on mobilizing greater attention to global development challenges and the needs of the most vulnerable countries and populations. The United Nations has also strongly advocated forward-looking policies and approaches towards sustainable, inclusive and equitable growth.

56. Since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, sustainable development has been the central topic of engagement between the United Nations and the Group of 20. The Group and its members, accounting for 85 per cent of the world economy and 66 per cent of population, play a leading role in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The United Nations has served as the main "port of call" for the Group for advice on aligning its work with the 2030 Agenda. In 2016, the Group's leaders, under the Chinese presidency, adopted an action plan on the 2030 Agenda, which, for the first time, mainstreamed the universal agenda agreed under the auspices of the United Nations into the work of the Group. Under the German presidency, the leaders further committed to lead the way towards sustainable development and to align actions with the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.[9]

57. The adoption, under the German presidency, of the Hamburg Update was a first step towards putting the action plan into practice. Under the current Argentine presidency, the Group is pursuing work under the theme of "Building consensus for fair and sustainable development". Many work streams of the Group also have a strong link with sustainable development. The United Nations has been instrumental in facilitating the design and development of the Group's action plans, their updates and work streams in relation to sustainable development.

58. A strategy for United Nations engagement with the Group of 20 has been developed. The aim of the strategy is to promote a more strategic and coordinated approach to engagement between the United Nations and the Group. It is envisaged that more coherent and visible United Nations messaging on issues of relevance to

[9] See Leaders' Declaration adopted by the Group of 20 at its summit held in Hamburg, Germany, on 7 and 8 July 2017.

the Group that are within the competence of the United Nations will be achieved through the implementation of the strategy. Towards that objective, the strategy sets out the framework for how the United Nations system will collaborate and further improve engagement, including working mechanisms. The growing breadth and depth of the Group's work and the implications thereof for the implementation of United Nations agendas might, however, necessitate a deeper form of interaction.

B. Cooperation with the African Union

59. Building upon the long-standing cooperation between the two organizations, the leaders of the United Nations and the African Union signed the Framework for the Implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in January 2018, stressing the importance of partnerships in accelerating the transformation of Africa.

60. The aim of the Framework is to provide a harmonized and integrated approach to the implementation of the two agendas so as to minimize duplication, optimize the use of resources and mobilize the support of domestic and external stakeholders and development partners. The Framework promotes an integrated approach to implementing the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, underpinned by an integrated financing mechanism that minimizes duplication, leverages economies of scale and optimizes the use of resources. The African Union and the United Nations are working together to implement the Addis Ababa Action Agenda as the key financing framework for the 2030 Agenda, with the aim of jointly identifying additional sources of financing and designing bankable projects.

61. In the light of the comparative advantages and mandates as well as the integrated nature of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, the African Union and the United Nations are seeking to jointly advance efforts to implement activities and programmes for the inclusive, broad-based and sustainable development of Africa. The activities and programmes prioritized under the Framework, subject to their relevant mandates and the availability of funds and resources, are included in the relevant workplans of the African Union and the United Nations and are implemented in accordance with their rules and procedures, especially the mandatory review processes.

VI. Conclusions

62. There are diverging views among Member States on approaches to global economic governance. Current arrangements in global economic governance are disparate, with norm-setting and policy coordination roles spread across a variety of global entities and arrangements.

63. Nevertheless, effective global economic governance is crucial to making progress on the 2030 Agenda at all levels. With global challenges such as rising inequality posing systemic risks, it is becoming more apparent that inclusiveness and sustainability must be important considerations in global economic governance.

64. In that regard, the United Nations, together with partners, contributes through its role in promoting multilateral approaches to global challenges through policy dialogue, norm- and standard-setting and related work. Through its normative work, policy analysis and operational activities, the United Nations fosters coherence and cooperation in support of the implementation of global agreements, including by contributing to the efforts of countries to address global challenges. Only within such an international environment can the objective of global economic governance be achieved. Although it is not a global economic decision-making body, the United

Nations has important contributions to make to global economic governance, including helping to create an enabling environment and orienting global economic policymaking towards longer-term, shared prosperity and sustainability.

65. Concrete steps have already been taken to closely align the set-up of international financial and trade institutions with global economic realities and the imperatives of sustainable development. Future efforts should focus on building consensus around further steps needed to strengthen international finance and trade to act as catalysts for inclusive, equitable and sustainable growth and ensure that no one is left behind. In addition, relevant United Nations intergovernmental processes are encouraged to consider options to engage other intergovernmental groupings more effectively in their policy dialogue and decision-making.

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Seventy-third session
Item 55 of the provisional agenda*
Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories

The occupied Syrian Golan

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report has been prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 72/88, in which the Secretary-General was requested to report to the Assembly at its seventy-third session on the implementation of the resolution. It contains information from the Permanent Missions of Egypt, Ireland, Qatar and the Syrian Arab Republic and from the International Labour Organization.

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1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 72/88, in which the Assembly called upon Israel, the occupying Power, to comply with the relevant resolutions on the occupied Syrian Golan, in particular Security Council resolution 497 (1981), in which the Council decided that the Israeli decision to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration on the occupied Syrian Golan was null and void and without international legal effect, and demanded that Israel rescind forthwith its decision. In its resolution, the Assembly also called upon Israel to desist from imposing Israeli citizenship and Israeli identity cards on the Syrian citizens in the occupied Syrian Golan and from changing the physical character, demographic composition, institutional structure and legal status of the occupied Syrian Golan and, in particular, to desist from the establishment of settlements. The Assembly determined that all legislative and administrative measures and actions taken or to be taken by Israel, the occupying Power, that purported to alter the character and legal status of the occupied Syrian Golan were null and void, constituted a flagrant violation of international law and of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and had no legal effect. The Assembly once again called upon Member States not to recognize any of the legislative or administrative measures and actions referred to in the resolution and requested the Secretary-General to report to the Assembly at its seventy-third session on the implementation of the resolution.

2. On 26 June 2018, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), on behalf of the Secretary-General, addressed a note verbale to Israel, in which Israel was asked to provide information on any measures that it had taken or envisaged taking concerning the implementation of the relevant provisions of the aforementioned resolution. At the time of reporting, no reply had been received.

3. On 25 June 2018, OHCHR, on behalf of the Secretary-General, sent notes verbales to the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic and all other permanent missions to the United Nations in Geneva, inviting them to provide information on any steps that they had taken or envisaged taking in relation to the implementation of the relevant provisions of the resolution. Responses were received from the Permanent Missions of Egypt, Ireland, Qatar and the Syrian Arab Republic. In addition, pursuant to the request of the General Assembly and on behalf of the Secretary-General, OHCHR brought resolution 72/88 to the attention of United Nations organs, specialized agencies, international and regional intergovernmental organizations and international humanitarian organizations. A response was received from the International Labour Organization (ILO).

4. In its reply dated 6 July 2018, the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic emphasized that, since 1967, the international community had rejected the Israeli occupation of the Syrian Golan, as reflected in several United Nations resolutions, most recently in General Assembly resolution 72/88. The Syrian Arab Republic recalled that, after 51 years of occupation, Israel continued its practices with impunity and with disregard for international law and United Nations resolutions, despite repeated calls to end the occupation and to halt its daily repressive practices in the occupied Syrian Golan.

5. The Syrian Arab Republic renewed its condemnation of and objection to the illegal decision of Israel to hold elections for the so-called local councils in the occupied Syrian Golan. It noted that the people of the occupied Syrian Golan had voiced similar concerns and objections, including through a public statement dated 11 July 2017.

6. According to the Syrian Arab Republic, Israel had persisted in its aggression and provocation by providing logistical support to what the Syrian Arab Republic

referred to as "terrorist groups" and the Nusrah Front — which is listed as a terrorist group in the Consolidated United Nations Security Council Sanctions List — operating in the separation zone as a consequence of the withdrawal of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force. The Syrian Arab Republic further reported that Israel had itself conducted several military operations inside the Syrian Arab Republic in support of the aforementioned groups, which, according to the Syrian Arab Republic, was in flagrant violation of international law and the separation of forces agreement.

7. The Syrian Arab Republic condemned the Israeli settlement policy in the occupied Syrian Golan, noting that Israel continued to disregard the resolutions of the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council on the matter, most recently Assembly resolution 72/88. The Syrian Arab Republic further noted that the Assembly had often qualified Israeli settlements in the occupied Syrian Golan as illegal and called upon Israel to desist from changing the physical character, demographic composition, institutional structure and legal status of the occupied Syrian Golan and, in particular, to desist from the establishment of settlements.

8. The Syrian Arab Republic condemned all Israeli practices and conduct aimed at controlling and exploiting natural resources in the occupied Syrian Golan, in violation of Security Council resolution 497 (1981) and General Assembly resolution 70/225, on the permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources. According to the Syrian Arab Republic, Israel continued to exploit the natural resources of the occupied Syrian Golan and allowed settlers exclusive use of those resources, while depriving the Syrian population of their benefits. The Syrian Arab Republic reiterated its concerns regarding the extraction of water by Israel from Mas'adah Lake to divert it to settler farms, considering that such action constituted a violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention and had led to an economic and environmental disaster for the occupied Syrian Golan. As another example of Israeli exploitation of natural resources, the Syrian Arab Republic warned of the seriousness of the decision of Israel to allow Genie Energy, a company based in the United States of America, to conduct oil prospecting operations in the occupied Syrian Golan.

9. Furthermore, as in previous years, the Syrian Arab Republic condemned the funding by the European Union in 2014 of a survey aimed at promoting alternative tourism in the Israeli settlements in the occupied Syrian Golan. It also called upon Member States to refrain, in accordance with their obligations under international law, from importing natural or manufactured products from the occupied territories.

10. The Syrian Arab Republic condemned the arbitrary arrests and the lack of due process and called upon the international community to urge Israel to immediately and unconditionally release two Syrian activists, namely Sidqi al-Miqt and Amal Abu Salah.

11. The Syrian Arab Republic reiterated its request to the Secretary-General, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the President of the Human Rights Council and the International Committee of the Red Cross to pressure Israel to secure a healthy environment and condemned Israel for burying nuclear waste with radioactive content in areas populated by Syrian citizens of the Golan, particularly in the vicinity of Jabal al-Shaykh (Mount Hermon). The Syrian Arab Republic noted that the aforementioned act had put the lives of Syrians in the occupied Syrian Golan in jeopardy, with 30 per cent of deaths among the population caused by cancer-related diseases.

12. As in previous years, the Syrian Arab Republic called for international pressure on Israel to allow the Syrian population of the occupied Syrian Golan to visit their

families in the Syrian Arab Republic through the Qunaytirah crossing. It noted that the prevention of such visits was in violation of the Geneva Conventions and customary international humanitarian law and led to the suffering of Syrians in the occupied Syrian Golan. In addition, the Syrian Arab Republic noted that the Qunaytirah crossing had come under the control of the terrorist group Nusrah Front, which had benefited from Israeli support in establishing that control. This, according to the Syrian Arab Republic, had prevented students from the occupied Syrian Golan from pursuing their studies in the Syrian Arab Republic.

13. The Syrian Arab Republic concluded by stating that reaching stability in the Middle East and maintaining the credibility of the United Nations would require concrete measures to ensure the effective implementation of all relevant international resolutions aimed at ending the Israeli occupation of all occupied Arab territories, including the occupied Syrian Golan, in compliance with Security Council resolutions such as resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 497 (1981), and 2334 (2016).

14. On 3 July 2018, the Permanent Mission of Qatar transmitted to OHCHR, via a note verbale, a copy of the resolution on the occupied Syrian Arab Golan adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States during its twenty-ninth summit, held on 15 April 2018. In the resolution, the Council demanded, inter alia, that Israel immediately end its occupation of the Syrian Arab Golan, desist from changing its legal status and from establishing settlements and rescind all such measures and procedures. The Council called upon Member States to pressure Israel, the occupying Power, to end its illegal occupation of the Syrian Golan and to fully adhere to relevant international resolutions, including General Assembly resolution 71/99.

15. In a note verbale dated 27 June 2018, the Permanent Mission of Ireland stated that the Government of Ireland had not recognized any of the legislative or administrative measures and actions taken by the Government of Israel in the occupied Syrian Golan.

16. In a note verbale dated 5 July 2018, the Permanent Mission of Egypt stated that the Government of Egypt did not recognize any legislative or administrative measures or actions taken by the occupying Power in the occupied Syrian Golan or any of the occupied territories since 1967.

17. In a note verbale dated 12 July 2018, ILO shared with OHCHR an excerpt of its report on the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories, which was submitted to the International Labour Conference at its 107th session, held in Geneva from 28 May to 8 June 2018.

18. ILO noted that Syrian farmers continued to suffer from discriminatory policies related to water and land access rights, limited marketability of crops, lack of access to the Syrian market and confiscation of land for security zones, natural reserves or development purposes. ILO recalled that Israeli settlers, together with the army, were reported to control 95 per cent of the land and that the expansion of the Syrian villages to accommodate their growing populations remained administratively constrained by Israeli planning and zoning policies.

19. ILO further reported that Israeli efforts to integrate the occupied Syrian Golan and its Syrian citizens into Israel had intensified, including by reinforcing investment in public infrastructure and providing village councils with increased public funding. In October 2018 and for the first time, village councils would be elected and not appointed. Israel planned to give Syrian citizens the right to vote in local council elections, but only Israeli passport holders would be eligible as candidates. According to ILO, the aforementioned developments heightened pressure on Syrian citizens to become legally integrated into Israel by obtaining Israeli citizenship.

20. In its report, ILO concluded that the cumulative effect of those developments was a rapidly emerging threat to Syrian identity in the occupied Syrian Golan and that the intensified efforts to fully integrate the occupied Syrian Golan into Israel were having a marked impact on perceptions and aspirations, particularly among youth.

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Item 117 (d) of the provisional agenda*
Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections: election of members of the Human Rights Council

Note verbale dated 30 August 2018 from the Permanent Mission of the Bahamas to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

The Permanent Mission of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas to the United Nations has the honour to present the candidature of the Bahamas to the Human Rights Council for the term 2019–2021 in the elections to be held during the seventy-third session of the General Assembly.

The Permanent Mission of the Bahamas also has the honour to transmit, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/251, a document containing voluntary pledges and commitments made by the Bahamas regarding its contribution to the promotion and protection of human rights in all aspects (see annex), and kindly requests that the present note and its annex be circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

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Annex to the note verbale dated 30 August 2018 from the Permanent Mission of the Bahamas to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Candidature of the Bahamas to the Human Rights Council, 2019–2021

Voluntary pledges and commitments pursuant to General Assembly resolution 60/251

1. The Bahamas, a small island developing State, is seeking election for the first time to the Human Rights Council as a demonstration of its unwavering commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all. The Bahamas believes that the fundamental rights and freedoms of all people must be protected and that small States ought to have a voice in ensuring such protection.

2. The Bahamas is the first member State of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) to seek election to the Human Rights Council. Its candidature was endorsed by CARICOM in September 2016. The election of the Bahamas to the Council would provide a unique opportunity to bring increased diversity to the international discourse on, and consideration of, global human rights issues, from the perspective of a small State. The Bahamas firmly believes in the need to ensure the inclusion and participation of all Member States in the work of the Council.

3. The Bahamas has a long and proud history of democracy and the rule of law, with the third oldest parliamentary system in the Western Hemisphere. The Bahamas has a robust legislative framework for the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, which are enshrined in its Constitution.

Commitments at the international level

4. The Bahamas is party to the following seven core international human rights treaties:

(a) Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;

(b) Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment;

(c) International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;

(d) International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;

(e) International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination;

(f) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;

(g) Convention on the Rights of the Child.

5. The Bahamas has also ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

6. The Bahamas is fully committed to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and recognizes the importance of advancing human rights as a pillar of such efforts. The Bahamas reaffirmed this in its voluntary national review on the Sustainable Development Goals, which was presented to the high-level political

forum on sustainable development, convened by the Economic and Social Council in New York in July 2018.

7. The Bahamas consistently co-sponsors and supports a number of General Assembly resolutions under the rubric of human rights, including those on trafficking in women and girls, ending obstetric fistula, the rights of the child, the right to food, the right to self-determination, the right to development and the enhancement of international cooperation in the field of human rights.

8. The Bahamas established its Permanent Mission to the United Nations Office at Geneva and other international organizations located there, in May 2013. The Mission has continued to demonstrate the unwavering commitment of the Bahamas to human rights and its interest in, and support for, the global human rights agenda. The Bahamas has a keen interest in the work of the Human Rights Council and desires to deepen its contribution to the advancement of human rights principles and values at the international level with a special focus on, inter alia, issues related to women, children, persons with disabilities, migration, health, small island developing States and sustainable development.

9. The Bahamas has engaged actively in the important work of the Human Rights Council by consistently increasing its participation in the universal periodic reviews of Member States, co-sponsoring key resolutions, issuing joint statements and delivering national and regional statements in the Council on issues such as: the rights of the child; the elimination of violence against women; the rights of persons with disabilities; the promotion of human rights through sport; youth and human rights; the right to education; national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights; the enhancement of technical cooperation and capacity-building; small island developing States at the Human Rights Council; and the promotion of the human rights of people of African descent. The Bahamas has also hosted side events during the annual sessions of the Council on issues it seeks to highlight. Key examples of such efforts include:

(a) The Bahamas co-hosted its first side event and brochure launch during the thirty-fifth session of the Human Rights Council. The event was aimed at looking beyond the 100 per cent participation of CARICOM at the Human Rights Council in terms of opportunities and challenges for the trust fund for least developed countries and small island developing States. On this occasion a brochure issued by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), entitled "Voices of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) in the Human Rights Council", was launched, highlighting the historic milestone of participation in the Council by all small island developing States that are members of CARICOM through the support of the trust fund for least developed countries and small island developing States. The Bahamas thus became the first beneficiary country of the trust fund to have financially sponsored a publication by OHCHR relating to the fund since it became operational in January 2014;

(b) The Bahamas also delivered the first joint statement by CARICOM members in the Human Rights Council during the annual full-day discussion on women at the thirty-fifth session of the Council;

(c) The Bahamas participates as a member of several groups of friends, including the Group of Friends of small island developing States and the Group of Friends of national mechanisms for reporting and follow-up.

10. These activities demonstrate some of the achievements of the Bahamas in the five years since it established its Permanent Mission at Geneva, through its sustained commitment and dedication to the work of the Human Rights Council.

11. The long-term objective of the Bahamas in seeking election to the Human Rights Council is to ensure that, in the exercise of foreign policy, human rights issues are central to the global discourse and are mainstreamed throughout the work of the United Nations system.

12. As a member of CARICOM, the Bahamas actively participated in the process of strengthening the United Nations treaty body system and is committed to supporting improvements to it, particularly those aimed at enhancing efficiencies and ensuring that human rights reporting is not a burden but an opportunity for sustained and meaningful engagement with the treaty bodies.

13. The Bahamas supports the work of the special procedures mandate holders of the Human Rights Council and has extended a standing invitation to all mandate holders since 2013. In December 2013, the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, undertook a field visit to the Bahamas. In this context, the Bahamas was commended for its willingness to combat trafficking in persons and for its adoption, in 2008, of a comprehensive law on trafficking in persons. The Bahamas has established a national task force on trafficking in persons and an interministerial committee on trafficking in persons. The Bahamas also extended an invitation to the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, who conducted a visit to the country in December 2017. In addition, the Group of Friends of the Convention against Torture Initiative visited the Bahamas in November 2017 to discuss with national authorities the challenges of ratifying and implementing the convention as well as ways in which assistance could be provided. The Bahamas ratified the Convention against Torture on 31 May 2018.

14. The Bahamas successfully underwent its first, second and third reviews under the universal periodic review procedure, in December 2008, January 2013 and January 2018, and has accepted a significant number of recommendations for implementation and further review.

15. The Bahamas also underwent, in 2012, its review under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and pledged its firm commitment to gender equality and the empowerment of women. Representatives of the Bahamas will appear before the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in October 2018, in accordance with the obligations of the country under the Convention. As a demonstration of its commitment to gender equality and the empowerment of women, the Bahamas participates actively, at the ministerial level, in the annual sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women and makes an annual voluntary contribution to the core resources of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women).

16. The Bahamas demonstrated its commitment to the empowerment and advancement of the rights of women both nationally and internationally through its support for the election of the first Bahamian national to a United Nations treaty body, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, in June 2016, in the person of Marion Bethel, a renowned gender champion in the Bahamas.

17. The Bahamas has consistently demonstrated its commitment to human rights and fundamental freedoms in practice by engaging with OHCHR and other United Nations entities:

(a) In June 2013, as a result of its request for technical assistance with the management of its reporting obligations under international conventions, the Bahamas agreed to be one of three States to participate in a case study conducted by OHCHR. The study, entitled "National Mechanisms for Reporting and Follow-up", assessed the engagement of States with international human rights mechanisms. The study was completed in 2015 and published in 2016. The purpose of the study was to

assist States parties and other actors in sharing knowledge, information and relevant good practices regarding national reporting and coordinating mechanisms. The study focused on the experiences of various countries in establishing a national reporting and coordinating mechanism for reporting to United Nations human rights bodies and following up on the implementation of the decisions and recommendations of the bodies. The study included four case studies which looked at the current practices and challenges faced in the establishment of mechanisms in these countries;

(b) In February 2014, after the Bahamas requested technical assistance, a workshop and training session were held on the reporting process and implementation of the United Nations treaty body system. The topics covered during the workshop were: an overview of the international human rights system; the reporting process; the treaty bodies — bringing human rights home; individual complaints and inquiry procedures; treaty implementation; and a mapping exercise prioritizing recommendations of the treaty bodies, special procedures and universal periodic reviews;

(c) The Bahamas is pleased that its request for technical assistance was granted in the form of opportunities to train its officers. The Bahamas nominated four of its officers to be trained at the OHCHR regional workshop on universal periodic reviews, in July 2015, and in December 2015 it sent two of its officers to an OHCHR-sponsored train-the-trainers programme on the United Nations human rights conventions for English-speaking Caribbean countries, Canada and the United States of America. One of its officers was invited to speak and act as an expert and resource person at the regional workshop on universal periodic reviews, held at the Novotel Suva Lami Bay conference centre, Fiji, in November 2015;

(d) A representative from the Bahamas chaired the high-level side event held in March 2017 to mark the fifth anniversary of the trust fund for least developed countries and small island developing States;

(e) The Bahamas has been a beneficiary of the trust fund for least developed countries and small island developing states, both as a fellow and in the thirty-seventh session of the Human Rights Council;

(f) The Bahamas has a partnership with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on matters relating to migration.

Commitments at the regional level

18. As the candidate to the Human Rights Council endorsed by CARICOM, the Bahamas undertakes to be an advocate within the subregion on human rights issues and to promote increased participation by CARICOM in the work of the Council. The Bahamas commits to sharing experiences and lessons learned at the regional level and beyond in the field of human rights.

19. In the framework of the programme on regional solidarity with the Caribbean, the Caribbean Migration Consultations, a new regional consultative process, was launched in 2016 with the support of UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration. It was the Bahamian delegation that highlighted the need to develop rights-based migration policies as the foundation of the comprehensive and effective management of mixed migration, using a regional coordination platform to achieve the goal. The Bahamas hosted the second round of the Caribbean Migration Consultations in December 2017 with the participation of 20 Caribbean countries.

20. As a member of a number of regional and subregional bodies, including the Organization of American States, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean Countries, the Association of Caribbean States and CARICOM, the Bahamas pledges

to work within such organizations to further promote and protect human rights at the regional level.

21. The Bahamas is a State party to regional human rights instruments, including the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (Convention of Belem do Para).

Commitments at the national level

22. The Bahamas is currently considering additional legislative measures to further enhance existing safeguards in order to promote and protect human rights on matters relating, inter alia, to migration and sexual offences.

23. The Bahamas intends to establish a national human rights institution in accordance with the Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups (Paris Principles) and, in this regard, tabled a bill in 2017 to establish the office of the ombudsperson.

24. In 2015 the Bahamas established a standing national mechanism for reporting and follow-up, an interministerial working group with the following terms of reference: to design a master framework for the scheduling, preparation and submission of the required reports for each treaty; to design a procedure for the delegation of recommendations forwarded by the treaty committees; to formulate a strategy for the implementation of the recommendations accepted by the responsible agency; and to determine and develop a monitoring device for the implemented recommendations.

Pledges and commitments

25. If elected to the Human Rights Council, the Bahamas makes the following commitments to:

(a) Uphold the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights;

(b) Fully support and engage constructively in the deliberations of the Human Rights Council, its subsidiary bodies and mechanisms, including the special procedures;

(c) Openly and constructively engage in a robust universal review procedure, including reporting on measures taken to follow up on recommendations;

(d) Meaningfully engage with its regional partners, including civil society organizations, on issues relating to human rights and to share best practices and lessons learned in this regard;

(e) Protect against and prevent discrimination in all its forms, in both law and practice;

(f) Assist in the development of a national reporting cooperation mechanism within the region and to support it in exchanging best practices;

(g) Advocate for diversity and inclusivity in the Human Rights Council to ensure that all small island developing States have a voice on the pre-eminent United Nations body responsible for the promotion and the protection of human rights;

(h) Ensure that, in the exercise of foreign policy, human rights issues are central to the global discourse and are mainstreamed throughout the work of the United Nations system;

(i) Continue to support all efforts aimed at guaranteeing effective responses by the international community to global human rights violations, such as prevention and early action;

(j) Promote international discourse on areas of human rights of particular concern to small island developing States, such as human rights and the environment, climate change, public service delivery and local government;

(k) Continue to advocate for the development of the institutional and human rights capacity of small island developing States and least developed countries;

(l) Contribute, at the international level, to the advancement of women's rights, children's rights, the rights of persons with disabilities and the advancement of human rights aspects of migration, health and sustainable development;

(m) Review and implement accepted recommendations from the universal periodic review of the Bahamas;

(n) Submit reports in a timely manner and implement concluding observations;

(o) Contribute to the global reform of the treaty body system;

(p) Cooperate with special procedures, accepting requests for visits and responding to communications and follow-up on recommendations;

(q) Contribute to international initiatives for the protection of human rights through the provision of financial resources.

26. The Bahamas pledges its full commitment to supporting all efforts aimed at guaranteeing effective responses by the international community to global human rights violations and new and existing human rights challenges.

27. The Bahamas welcomes the invaluable support of Member States for its candidature for election to the Human Rights Council.

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Item 117 (d) of the provisional agenda*
Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections: election of members of the Human Rights Council

Note verbale dated 10 August 2018 from the Permanent Mission of Bahrain to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

The Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Bahrain to the United Nations presents it compliments to the Office of the President of the General Assembly and has the honour to refer to the candidacy of the Kingdom of Bahrain for election to the Human Rights Council for the period 2019–2021, at the elections to be held during the seventy-third session of the General Assembly in New York.

In accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/251, the Permanent Mission has the further honour to enclose herewith the pledges and commitments of the Government of the Kingdom of Bahrain, reaffirming its commitment to the protection and promotion of all human rights (see annex).

In this regard, the Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Bahrain would be most grateful if the present note and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under item 117 (d) of the provisional agenda.

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Annex to the note verbale dated 10 August 2018 from the Permanent Mission of Bahrain to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Candidature of Bahrain to the Human Rights Council, 2019–2021

Voluntary pledges and commitments pursuant to General Assembly resolution 60/251

1. The Kingdom of Bahrain is committed to the promotion and protection of human rights domestically and internationally. The Kingdom of Bahrain recognizes the important role of the Human Rights Council in this global effort. We believe that the Kingdom of Bahrain can bring a useful contribution to the work of the Council. Therefore, the Kingdom of Bahrain has decided to present its candidature for election to the Human Rights Council for the period 2019–2021 in the election to be held during the seventy-third session of the General Assembly, in the fall of 2018.

2. Bahrain has witnessed political and legislative developments since 2002, the most prominent of which is the practice of citizens, both men and women, of their political and civil rights through participation in public affairs, including in the social, cultural and economic spheres, and by running for parliamentary and municipal elections; and the legislative authority's exercise of its constitutional right to oversee functions of the executive branch through its representatives in the Parliament.

3. The Constitution of Bahrain consists of the principles of equality, justice and freedom and considers them to be among the pillars of society. There is no discrimination between persons on account of gender, race, language, religion or creed.

4. The national legislation also reflects the respect for rights and freedoms. For instance, legislation guarantees human and social rights in the areas of: work and insurance against unemployment; protection of the rights of the child, older persons and women; combating trafficking in persons; care and rehabilitation of persons with disabilities; protection from family violence; ensuring freedom of opinion, expression and belief; and ensuring the free and unrestricted exercise of religion and religious rights and practices in a framework of tolerance and mutual respect between the components of society with various religious, sectarian, cultural and ethnic affiliations. The national legislation also guarantees the freedom of civil society institutions through the formation of over 600 human rights associations covering various fields such as social, women's, religious and other issues.

5. Building on these achievements, the Kingdom of Bahrain makes the following voluntary pledges and commitments for the period 2019–2021:

Voluntary pledges and commitments

1. Rights of women

Pledge:

The Kingdom of Bahrain will continue its efforts to play an international role and share best practices in promoting the empowerment of women and equal opportunities between men and women at the national and international levels

6. Bahraini women have obtained their full rights in the framework of equal opportunities and social justice in all fields in accordance with the Constitution and without prejudice to the provisions of the Islamic sharia. Under the aegis of the Head of State and with regard to women's political rights, Bahraini women have stepped up to executive positions and proved to be trustworthy equals. In 2001, the Head of

State appointed the first female Secretary-General of the Supreme Council for Women, who became the first Bahraini woman to hold a ministerial ranked post across the Arabian Gulf region. In 2004, the first female cabinet minister was appointed as Minister of Health.

7. During the period from 2004 to 2017, the Government witnessed the appointment of a number of female cabinet ministers in fields such as social development, health, human rights, culture and information, where their performance was characterized by discipline and high productivity in the sectors that they occupied, reflecting thereby the level of competence that Bahraini women have in general. In 2017, Bahraini women held three ministerial positions. They also represented 8 per cent of the House of Representatives and 23 per cent of the Shura Council (appointed chamber of the legislative authority).

8. Moreover, the progress of Bahraini women at the international level is reflected in, inter alia, membership in international committees such as the Commission on the Status of Women, where the Kingdom of Bahrain was assigned by the League of Arab States to lead the negotiations on behalf of the 22 Arab States on the agreed conclusions of the sixty-first and sixty-second sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women of the Economic and Social Council; as well as the Executive Board of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the adoption and launch of the Princess Sabeeka Bint Ibrahim Al Khalifa Global Award for Women's Empowerment in March 2017, and the opening of the programme office of UN-Women in the Kingdom of Bahrain in the presence of the Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Director of UN-Women.

9. Furthermore, after years of consultation and study among all the components of society, the Kingdom of Bahrain succeeded in issuing the Family Law (Law No. 19 of 2017), in recognition of the importance of completing the legislative system of laws that support the stability of women and families. It includes comprehensive provisions, guaranteeing the Bahraini family all degrees of litigation to the courts of cassation in adjudicating family issues, and is seen as a reflection of national unity and social coherence in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

2. Rights of the child

Pledge:

The Kingdom of Bahrain will continue its efforts to enact new legislation that will protect and guarantee the rights of the child and expand programmes based on the welfare and the social, health, psychological and educational rights of the child

10. The importance is recognized of promoting children's affairs, protecting their rights and ensuring a safe environment that allows for the full development of their abilities and talents and taking appropriate steps in the areas of health and education to take care of the psychological, social and cultural needs of children in accordance with the national strategy based on the best interests of the child. Training programmes have been established for teachers of various levels in public schools, and kindergarten teachers have been involved in a range of activities, workshops and training programmes to raise their professional competence for educational dealings with students in coordination with the relevant authorities. In addition to the establishment of a psychosocial counselling centre to care for the psychological and social guidance of students.

11. The Royal Charity Organization, established under a royal decree issued on 14 August 2001, sponsors orphans who have lost their parents. His Majesty the King holds the honorary presidency of the Organization and his son presides over the Board

of Trustees. The orphans are given the personal care of the King, which is to visit them and receive them on a regular basis in addition to sponsoring activities for them. The Organization provides educational support in the provision of school bags and the provision of free seats for orphans in kindergartens in cooperation with kindergartens, companies and private sector institutions, according to the number of seats obtained annually and the allocation of another free number of seats for orphans in private schools in cooperation with schools and companies and private sector institutions. In addition to taking into consideration their circumstances, the Organization provides people to assist them in preparing for final exams through educational institutions. After the completion of their studies, 50 seats will be reserved for those who get 80 per cent and above in public and private universities, as well as other seats supported by companies and private sector institutions.

12. Furthermore, a number of cultural initiatives have been launched, including an annual Ramadan competition called #Hashtag, which is a competition for children, aimed at raising children's awareness and enhancing their confidence. Other programmes were developed to raise health awareness and improve healthy lifestyles.

13. The Kingdom of Bahrain submitted its combined fourth to sixth periodic reports on the progress made in relation to the Convention on the Rights of the Child to the Committee on the Rights of the Child in Geneva (September 2017).

3. Combating trafficking in persons

Pledge:

The Kingdom of Bahrain will strengthen its national anti-trafficking strategies and support United Nations efforts as well as exchange best practices to combat trafficking in persons

14. Believing that the issue of trafficking in persons is a challenge that requires concerted national efforts to keep the Kingdom of Bahrain free from all types and manifestations of this global crime, and to address them and develop mechanisms to eliminate them in the event of indications of their existence, the Kingdom of Bahrain has taken a set of measures to ensure coordination and cooperation between the governmental parties and civil society to combat this crime within the visions and mechanisms contained in the national strategy to combat trafficking in persons.

15. In May 2017, the National Referral Mechanism for Victims of Trafficking in Persons, the first of its kind in the region, was launched. The system aims at strengthening measures to combat trafficking in persons, clarifying and regulating the role of different agencies and their mechanisms in dealing with any trafficking situation or suspected trafficking.

16. To assess the status of foreign victims of trafficking in persons, and in accordance with Ministerial Decree No. 4 of 2017, the National Committee for Combating Trafficking in Persons has been re-established and is currently chaired by the Labour Market Regulatory Authority. The Committee includes representatives from the Ministry of Labour and Social Development, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of the Interior and the Public Prosecution, along with representatives of non-governmental organizations. The Committee examines all reports concerning victims, hears their statements or those of their legal representatives and removes any obstacles that may prevent foreign victims obtaining work if this is deemed necessary on the basis of what the Chair of the Committee has been told by the competent authority in this regard. It coordinates with the Ministry of the Interior to return victims to their country of nationality or their place of residence in any other State, if so requested, recommends whether it is appropriate for a victim to remain in Bahrain, adjusts their legal situation to enable them to work and refers this recommendation to

the Minister of the Interior for approval. If the recommendation is approved, it is subject to review under the same procedure at least every six months.

17. The Committee has opened a shelter for men and another for women who may have been exposed to trafficking in persons. The Ministry of Labour and Social Development is also building an integrated centre for victims of human trafficking with a capacity of more than 120 persons.

18. The Kingdom of Bahrain takes pride in its international achievement as the first Arab State to reach tier 1 in the *Trafficking in Persons Report* issued by the Department of State of the United States of America in June 2018.

4. Rights of persons with disabilities

Pledge:

- ***The Kingdom of Bahrain will continue its efforts to promote the rights of persons with disabilities and their integration into society***
- ***The Kingdom of Bahrain will continue to provide for the special technical and accessibility needs of persons with disabilities in all State enterprises and public places***

19. The Kingdom of Bahrain places great importance on the care of persons with disabilities, as it has gained further support and momentum in the framework of the comprehensive national reform project launched by His Majesty the King. All government institutions that have key roles in the rehabilitation process, institutions from the private sector and civil society and non-governmental organizations work in synergy, where roles are integrated in the form of a partnership system between all parties, to provide various types of care for persons with disabilities, including social, health and cultural care, as well as rehabilitation and training for their integration into society and the labour market.

20. The Kingdom of Bahrain works towards increasing the participation of people with disabilities in society and the economy. This is evident in the initiatives launched by the Kingdom aimed towards this goal, such as the adoption of a law requiring the issuance of a card to persons with disabilities with which a reduction of not less than 50 per cent of the fees imposed by the State shall be granted. The Danat project supports and nurtures small businesses for persons with disabilities. It consists of setting up kiosks in gardens, parks and vital areas in the provinces of the Kingdom in cooperation with the Coca-Cola Company and the Ministry of Municipalities and Agriculture, aiming at crystallizing the effective development role of the disabled and moving them from receiving care to having an active role of production and creativity.

21. The Sheik Nasser Bin Hamad creativity award for persons with disabilities is also an example of the steps taken by the Kingdom towards the inclusion of people with disabilities. The award displays the interest of the Kingdom in the creativity of persons with disabilities, highlighting their capacities and creativity, strengthening the competitive spirit among them as well as enhancing intellectual, artistic and scientific creativity and implementing this to deepen their development.

22. The Kingdom of Bahrain submitted its combined initial and second periodic reports on the progress of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Geneva (October 2017).

5. Religious tolerance and freedom of belief

Pledge:

The Kingdom of Bahrain will continue its role in supporting initiatives to promote religious freedom and eliminate any incitement to sectarianism, violence, anti-nationalism, religious or racial hatred, as well as expanding its commitment to defend religious tolerance and peaceful coexistence at the international level

23. The Kingdom of Bahrain is a model of the coexistence and harmony between the followers of different religions, sects and cultures, thanks to the openness and freedom set by His Majesty the King within the framework of his comprehensive reform project. Many initiatives have been taken in this regard, including the launch of the Kingdom of Bahrain Declaration, which calls for religious tolerance and peaceful coexistence throughout the world as a basis for promoting religious freedom, and the launch of the King Hamad Global Centre for Interfaith Dialogue and Peaceful Coexistence under the aegis of His Majesty the King, which is a significant historical impression recorded in the name of Bahrain, Arabs and Muslims.

24. The King Hamad Chair for Inter-Faith Dialogue and Peaceful Coexistence at Sapienza University of Rome was also established in November 2017 to teach dialogue, peace and interreligious understanding. This initiative will give young people from all over the world the chance to learn the noble values called for in the Kingdom of Bahrain, especially in the rapprochement between the religions and doctrines. It will also shed light on the actions taken by the Kingdom to establish these values in Bahraini society, in addition to teaching students values, ethics and tolerance among all.

6. Protection of workers' rights

Pledges:

- ***Under the laws and regulations of the Kingdom of Bahrain, the Kingdom will maintain the rights of workers and monitor the relationship between the worker and the employer to ensure full compliance with the labour law in the private sector and ministerial decisions related to it, in accordance with the relevant international standards***
- ***The Kingdom of Bahrain will publish its successful and pioneering practices in the field of reforming the labour market at the regional and international levels, namely the flexible work permit project for expatriate workers***

25. Bahrain is one of the leading countries in the field of labour market reform and the protection of workers' rights, namely through the flexible work permit project, which is considered one of the best international practices, in addition to granting expatriate workers the right to move from one employer to another without the consent of their previous employer according to the fair rules stipulated by law. The Kingdom also allows all workers to benefit from the system of insurance against unemployment without discrimination on the basis of their nationality to protect workers from destitution and need during periods of disruption. Foreign workers, the same as Bahraini workers, have the right to represent all workers in trade unions regardless of their nationality. They also have the right to strike and defend their legitimate interests, to undertake trade union activities and, as trade unionists, to be protected from dismissal because of their trade union activity.

26. The Kingdom was elected as a regular member of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office in the government group for the period 2017–2020 in the elections held during the 106th session of the International Labour Conference in June 2017. This reflects Bahrain's growing international standing and confidence, as well

as the appreciation and recognition of member States of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation for their outstanding efforts and achievements in the field of labour.

7. Cooperation with the United Nations, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Human Rights Council and humanitarian organizations

Pledge:

- ***The Kingdom of Bahrain will carry on its cooperation with international organizations concerned with humanitarian issues and United Nations human rights treaty bodies***
- ***The Kingdom of Bahrain will continue to cooperate with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the specialized agencies of the United Nations with regard to meeting its training needs in the protection of human rights, building national capacity and raising public awareness as well as developing national plans to protect and promote human rights***
- ***The Kingdom of Bahrain will continue to strengthen human rights bodies in their preventive and protective activities, such as the National Institution for Human Rights, the Prisoners and Detainees Rights Commission, the Special Investigations Unit and the Ombudsman***

27. The Kingdom of Bahrain has continued to contribute financially to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, as well as to other programmes, on an ongoing basis. Such contributions are intended to strengthen the work of the Office and the implementation of its programmes.

8. Sustainable Development Goals

Pledge:

The Kingdom of Bahrain will take concrete steps to continue the national development process with the support of the Government's leading programmes to implement and raise awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals

28. Building on its experience in achieving the Millennium Development Goals before their target date of 2015, the Kingdom of Bahrain has taken several steps to adopt the Sustainable Development Goals. The Kingdom has paid great attention to these goals and has been strongly committed to achieving them since their endorsement in 2000. The Kingdom has achieved important steps, such as:

- Percentage of the population living in extreme poverty is zero.
- Average economic growth in the past decade stands at 37.4 per cent and average GDP per capita is US$ 22,000.
- Public expenditure on health, education and social protection exceeds 35 per cent of the budget.
- Basic education is free and compulsory. Net enrolment ratio for primary and secondary levels is 100 per cent and 86.4 per cent, respectively, thus eliminating illiteracy. KG2 enrolment is 82 per cent.
- Health care is free and universal. The maternal mortality ratio and the mortality rate for children aged under 5 years dropped to 28.6 deaths per 100,000 live births and 9 deaths per 1,000 live births, respectively, compared with 226 deaths per 100,000 live births and 44 deaths per 1,000 live births worldwide.

- The Constitution guarantees gender equality. There are two committees instituted by the Supreme Council for Women to ensure equal opportunities and gender-responsive budgeting. Women hold 55 per cent of supervisory positions, with 53 per cent and 33 per cent participation in the public and private sector, respectively.
- The private sector is a key development partner. It provides equal high-paying employment opportunities, contributing to the lowering of total unemployment to 4 per cent.
- 65 per cent of the population has benefited from public housing services, with five new sustainable cities being developed.
- The coverage of safe water, sanitation and clean energy networks reached 100 per cent.
- The Labour Fund (Tamkeen) provides vast support to small and medium-sized enterprises. More than 47,000 small and medium-sized enterprises and 120,000 individuals, including women, youth and persons with disabilities have benefited from its financial and training support.

9. Follow-up of the universal periodic review

Pledge:

- ***The Kingdom of Bahrain will ensure the implementation of the recommendations which were accepted during its third universal periodic review***
- ***The Kingdom of Bahrain will submit a voluntary midterm report on the progress that has been accomplished***

29. In March 2012, the Kingdom of Bahrain submitted to the Human Rights Council its second national report, which was adopted by the Council in May of the same year. In September 2012, Bahrain fully supported 145 recommendations, partially supported 13 and rejected 18 recommendations. In addition to this report, the Kingdom of Bahrain submitted a voluntary report in 2014 on progress made on applying the recommendations accepted in the framework of the universal periodic review.

30. The Kingdom of Bahrain submitted its third national report to the universal periodic review of human rights in February 2017. The report was published in various newspapers and through other media and on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Bahrain. Subsequently, Bahrain reviewed the report at the Human Rights Council in Geneva on 1 May 2017.

31. The Council adopted the outcome of the review of the Kingdom on 21 September 2017, and many delegates of the States participating in the thirty-sixth session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva praised the position of the Kingdom of Bahrain on the recommendations contained in the report of the Working Group on the third cycle of the review.

10. National policies and strategies

Pledge:

The Kingdom of Bahrain will continue to expand the scope of the various existing national strategies and plans aimed at guaranteeing, propagating, protecting and promoting human rights

32. Bahrain has drawn up several national plans and strategies that guarantee, assist, propagate and promote human rights at the national level, including those set out below.

Government Programme of Action 2015–2018

33. In the preparation of its work programme (2015–2018) entitled "Towards the justice, security and well-being of society", the Government of Bahrain adopted th principle of balance between the potential and resources of Bahrain, the challenges it faces, the requirements and needs of citizens and residents, continued development and construction and an emphasis on the sustainable development of the Kingdom, at the same time taking care to promote individual rights, freedom of opinion and expression and respect for human rights and to work within a framework of constitutional and legal legitimacy.

34. In that sense, it is also taking the steps necessary to complete its review of the laws and regulations in order to ensure their compliance with Bahrain's obligations under international and regional conventions and treaties to promote freedom of opinion and expression, individual rights and combat discrimination in all its forms.

35. Through the programme of action, the Government is endeavouring to bring about a society in which justice, security, stability and prosperity prevail, building upon previous achievements in a framework that ensures sustainable development and provides the necessary services to citizens, diversifies the national economic base, enhances competitiveness, develops an investment climate and strengthens the role of the private sector and human resources, as Bahrainis are the pivot, essence and engine of development.

36. The aims of the programme include the protection of the democratic political system and comprehensive development.

Economic Vision 2030

37. In October 2008, a comprehensive economic vision for the Kingdom of Bahrain was launched to give a clear direction to the continuing development of the Bahraini economy, which, in essence, reflects the fundamental common objective of building a better life for all Bahrainis. Economic Vision 2030 was launched after four years of intensive talks with a wide range of opinion leaders in the public and private sectors, including government institutions, specialized institutions, advisory institutions and global bodies. It focuses on the formulation of a vision of the Government, society and the economy based on the three essential guiding principles of sustainability, justice and competitiveness.

Government Forum 2017

38. A new national strategy was launched through the Government Forum 2017. The forum included a review of the Government Programme of Action 2015–2018, as well as the policies and procedures of various government bodies.

39. By addressing a series of critical areas and topics related to the Kingdom's growth, the Forum acts as an important platform for discussing the role of the public

sector in delivering the Kingdom's vision of comprehensive development led by His Majesty King Hamad.

40. The 2017 Forum built on the success of the 2016 Forum, which resulted in significant advancements, including increased government collaboration, improvements to public services, and the implementation of measures designed to boost productivity and address economic challenges.

41. The annual event reflects the Government of Bahrain's commitment to facilitating long-lasting development across a range of sectors in line with the principles of justice, competitiveness and sustainability that underpin Bahrain's Economic Vision 2030.

National Development Strategy 2015–2018

42. The National Development Strategy was prepared in connection with Economic Vision 2030 and is a road map for the national economy and government action. It focuses on consolidating the links between government policies and identifying the most important strategic initiatives to be implemented during this period.

43. Additional strategies include:

(a) National Childhood Strategy 2013–2016;

(b) National Strategy for Persons with Disabilities 2012–2016;

(c) National Strategy for Older Persons.

44. Policies and measures have also been introduced to encourage respect and protect human rights. These include:

(a) Establishment of the High Authority for Information and Communications under Royal Decree No. 47 of 2013;

(b) Launch by the Supreme Judicial Council of the "Future judges" project to train candidates for the judiciary in the capabilities and competencies needed by members of the judiciary.

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Letter dated 29 August 2018 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Eritrea to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

I have the honour to inform you that the Government of the State of Eritrea has decided to present its candidature to the Human Rights Council for the period 2019–2021 for the seats allocated to the African States in the elections to be held in October 2019. During its thirty-third ordinary session, the Executive Council of the African Union endorsed the candidature of Eritrea to the Human Rights Council (see Executive Council decision EX.CL/Dec.1008-1030(XXXIII)).

In this regard, the Government of the State of Eritrea has the honour to transmit its statement of voluntary pledges and commitments for the promotion and protection of human rights in accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/251 (see annex).

(*Signed*) Amanuel **Giorgio**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

* A/73/150.

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Annex to the letter dated 29 August 2018 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Eritrea to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Candidature of Eritrea to the Human Rights Council, 2019–2021

Voluntary pledges and commitments pursuant to General Assembly resolution 60/251

1. Eritrea is seeking membership of the Human Rights Council for the period 2019–2021 in the elections to be held in October 2018. During its thirty-third ordinary session, the Executive Council of the African Union endorsed the candidature of Eritrea to the Human Rights Council (see Executive Council decision EX.CL/Dec.1008-1030(XXXIII)). Eritrea's interest in serving in the Council reflects its determination and its commitment to contributing to the effective implementation of the underlying principles of the human rights architecture of the United Nations, which befit the lofty ideals of humanity.

2. Consistent with its commitment to promoting and protecting human rights, Eritrea is a party to core regional and international human rights instruments, including the following:

- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights
- Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
- Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
- Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29)
- Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87)
- Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98)
- Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100)
- Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105)
- Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111)
- Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138)

3. In accordance with resolution 60/251, in which the General Assembly established the Human Rights Council, and with due regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Charter of the United Nations and all other international and regional human rights instruments to which Eritrea is a party, Eritrea presents its voluntary pledges below.

I. Protecting and promoting human rights at the national level

4. Eritrea is a safe, peaceful and stable nation with remarkable harmony among its diverse population. Its evolving political system seeks to foster the broadest possible

participation of its citizens at home and abroad, at all levels and in all of the affairs of the nation. Eritrea is working to build a justice system based on a body of laws, including the supreme law of the land.

5. Eritrea is committed to development that is sustained and equitable and that supports the material, social and cultural aspirations of the people, in particular the youth. After years of difficulty, the foundation for broad-based growth is being laid lesson by lesson, brick by brick and institution by institution. As many who have partnered with it will confirm, Eritrea makes judicious and effective use of available resources. National ownership and national responsibility are the pillars of its approach to nation-building. Eritrea makes the following pledges:

(a) To accelerate its efforts to complete the people-centred nation-building project of creating a peaceful and prosperous country without discrimination along regional, ethnic, linguistic, religious, gender or class lines, and to ensure macroeconomic stability, strengthen the participatory political system and the rule of law, and create efficient, responsive and transparent institutions;

(b) To foster harmony among different sectors of the country, protect the equal rights of all citizens in law and in practice, and combat and eradicate all forms of discrimination, exclusion and marginalization through increased social and economic investment aimed at expanding opportunities to historically underprivileged areas;

(c) To increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the national coordination body for the universal periodic review, composed of representatives from line ministries and civil society organizations, in order to enable it to monitor the implementation of recommendations issuing from the review in a timely manner;

(d) To ensure the supremacy of and respect for the law, increase the accessibility, efficiency, transparency and accountability of the judicial system and of measures of redress at all levels in the public and private sectors and to enhance and implement national laws to further promote and protect rights;

(e) To enhance the capacities of law enforcement in Eritrea to ensure human security, combat transnational organized crime and promote the rule of law;

(f) To strive to ensure the equal participation of women in all areas and encourage them to protect and promote their rights by organizing among themselves and, in that regard, accelerate the implementation of the National Gender Action Plan aimed at empowering women and combating and eradicating all forms of violence against women;

(g) To further expand opportunities for persons with disabilities to live in dignity, become self-sufficient and contribute to the society in which they live;

(h) To mainstream regional and international human rights instruments to which Eritrea is a party into its national programmes and institutions on the basis of national priorities and context.

II. Promoting international partnerships and dialogue on human rights

6. Eritrea is a modest regional and global actor that is independent, constructive, active and conscious. Eritrea believes in solidarity among nations and peoples and in genuine and mutually beneficial partnerships.

7. Eritrea further believes that international engagement in the promotion and protection of human rights should be aimed at strengthening the capacity of States to fulfil their national priorities and international obligations. The international community should address conditions that impede the full enjoyment of all human rights. Discussions on human rights cannot be meaningful without addressing

poverty, instability, occupation and unjustified sanctions that significantly impact the rights of peoples to live in peace, harmony and development. Eritrea makes the following additional pledges:

(a) To expand its regional and international engagement with a view to fostering mutual understanding, resolving conflicts and promoting peace, development and respect for human dignity and to advocate the balanced and timely implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

(b) To continue its active engagement in regional and international forums in order to promote genuine and constructive dialogue in the area of human rights, based on the principle that human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated;

(c) To fulfil its reporting obligations in respect of regional and international human rights mechanisms and develop a framework to map their timely submissions and to submit its fifth periodic report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child and its sixth periodic report to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women;

(d) To continue its engagement and technical cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR);

(e) To take the measures necessary to expedite the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime;

(f) To advocate the protection of the rights of migrants with a view to enhancing their contribution to their countries of origin and destination and to strengthen international cooperation to combat the smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons;

(g) To enhance its cooperation with the mechanisms of the Council by facilitating visits by the special procedures mandate holders, to whom it has already extended an invitation.

III. Advocating an effective and credible Human Rights Council

8. Human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated, and all human rights should be treated in an equal manner. Eritrea believes that dialogue and cooperation enhance the effectiveness of global human rights mechanisms. Conversely, confrontation, double standards and politicization contribute to polarization and the erosion of the credibility of these mechanisms. If elected as a member of the Council, Eritrea further pledges the following:

(a) To work towards a more effective and credible Council and conduct inclusive, cross-regional and transparent dialogue in the protection and promotion of human rights across all countries and regions;

(b) To advocate equal treatment by the Council in its deliberations and decisions with regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;

(c) To work to strengthen support and cooperation in respect of the universal periodic review, recognizing it as the most effective mechanism to promote human rights through dialogue and technical assistance;

(d) To advocate meaningful participation by the least developed countries in the universal periodic review and human rights treaty bodies through technical and financial assistance and through mainstreaming reporting obligations;

(e) To encourage and support constructiwe contributions from non-governmental organizations and civil society organizaitions;

(f) To advocate and work to enhance the capacitty of OHCHR to provide technical support to Member States.